

Erica Frydenberg · Andrew J. Martin
Rebecca J. Collie *Editors*

Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific

Perspectives, Programs and Approaches

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 Springer

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ISBN 978-981-10-3393-3

ISBN 978-981-10-3394-0 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3394-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016959257

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.

The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Foreword

Keywords Social and emotional learning, Collaboration, Evidence-based programs, Implementation, Action research

Social and Emotional Learning: It's Time for More International Collaboration

When I read a book, I look for a key message that inspires and motivates action. From the outset in Chapter “[Social and Emotional Learning: A Brief Overview and Issues Relevant to Australia and the Asia-Pacific](#)”, the editors point out that this is an opportune time for greater cross-country collaboration and that there are important social and emotional learning (SEL) contributions from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region that should be shared (Collie et al. 2017). Their concluding chapter ends with the impressively substantiated observation that “there is theory, research and practice in Australia and the Asia-Pacific that provide constructive and promising foundations for social and emotional learning going forward” (Martin et al. 2017, p. 459). I learned a great deal from reading the diverse viewpoints expressed across this volume’s 24 chapters and am enthusiastic about the powerful benefits that international SEL exchanges will yield to improve education and the lives of children.

Humphrey (2013) asserted that SEL is now a global phenomenon that has captured the interest of researchers, educators, and policy-makers. The interest is due, in part, to the growing number of research studies documenting that well-implemented SEL programs foster short-term and long-term improvements in student behaviour and academic performance (Durlak et al. 2011; Taylor et al. 2017). SEL is a dynamic, continuously improving field that has grown substantially since nine co-authors from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) introduced and defined the term 20 years ago (Elias et al. 1997). One example of growth is the fact that there are 95 contributors to the *Handbook of*

Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice (Durlak et al. 2015) and another 57 contributors to the current volume (Frydenberg et al. 2017). It is also noteworthy that people from more than 125 countries have visited CASEL's Web page at www.casel.org during the last year.

CASEL's mission has been to help make evidence-based SEL an essential part of preschool to high school education. It is affirming to see the interest that scholars and educators have in key concepts that we have advanced, such as the five core competence areas (e.g. self-awareness, self-management, social, awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) and the importance of contextual factors and multiple stakeholders (e.g. teachers, administrators, families, community members, and policy-makers) in supporting the quality implementation of systemic, evidence-based SEL (Weissberg et al. 2015).

At the same time, many of the chapter authors present perspectives on limitations of the field on the ways SEL research and practice can improve. Many of the challenges arise as people question the universality of SEL and its applicability to their context. For this reason, it is illuminating to learn the perspectives of scholars from Australia, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, and several Pacific Islands.

CASEL's long name—the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning—was chosen quite intentionally. Because of our primary focus in schools, we emphasize the promotion of students' *A*cademic, *S*ocial, and *E*motional competence. Perhaps more relevant for this foreword are the facts that we are a *C*ollaborative and *L*earning organization.

I first learned the value of collaboration 40 years ago as a young action researcher who designed and evaluated classroom-based, teacher-taught social-problem-solving programs (Weissberg and Gesten 1982). I quickly learned that teachers taught the programs better than I wrote them. By observing their implementation of lessons and creating communities of practice to discuss what worked and what did not, we improved the programming in ongoing ways over several years. This approach incorporates strategies that are similar to the ones that Frydenberg and Muller (2017) described in their important chapter on formative evaluation.

Over the years, CASEL has collaborated with schools (Oberle et al. 2016), with districts (Mart et al. 2015), and with states (Dusenbury et al. 2015). In all instances, we begin with resources and needs assessment to build from strengths and programming that are underway rather than introducing add-ons that do not take into account the accomplishments and context of our collaborating partners. We believe that we learn as much from our collaborators as they learn from us. We use a transactional approach to designing, implementing, evaluating, and continuously improving programming that benefits all stakeholders in the system—especially the students.

Several contributors to the book acknowledge that the first decade of SEL research and practice took place primarily in the United States and Europe. Although that is the case, the chapters in this book show that efforts underway in Australia and the Asia-Pacific build on and add to them. In other words, we have a lot to learn from each other as we move into a third decade of SEL research, practice, and policy. Some key questions of common interest include the following:

- How might SEL conceptual approaches be improved through integrating various frameworks (e.g. Self-Determination Theory) or personal and environmental constructs (e.g. motivation, sense of school connectedness, and autonomy-supportive environments) more explicitly into their intervention and assessment models?
- What are the best practical, scientifically sound SEL assessment methods that can guide beneficial programming for students?
- To what extent is SEL universal and to what extent should it be culturally fit? Should SEL programming be designed differently in individualistic or collectivist societies? How should programming be tailored to best meet the need of diverse groups of students including indigenous populations or students who are at-risk or gifted?
- What can research tell us about the differential effects of freestanding SEL programming versus programming that is integrated with the teaching of academic subjects?
- In what ways does systemic school-wide SEL add value to evidence-based classroom SEL programs?
- What are the best ways that schools, families, and communities can partner to provide the best learning opportunities that foster the social, emotional, and academic competence of students?
- How can SEL be integrated effectively with other fields and philosophies such as positive education, character education, twenty-first century competencies, religious and moral education, or Eastern philosophy?
- What are the best ways to prepare and support teachers, student-support personnel, and administrators to implement and continuously improve SEL programming for students? In addition, what should be done to foster the social-emotional competence and well-being of the educators?
- What are the implications for supporting the effective implementation, sustainability, and scaling of SEL in countries with centralized versus decentralized education systems? What are the pros and cons of top-down or bottom-up strategies for quality school-based implementation of SEL?

What are the best ways to advance this learning agenda in the future? As I propose an agenda, I want to share two key lessons that I learned during my seven years (1986–1993) with the William T. Grant Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social Competence, a multidisciplinary group that preceded CASEL and the field of SEL (Weissberg 2000). First, it took several years of meetings for group members to fully understand each other’s theoretical frameworks, intervention strategies, and assessment approaches. Second, our learning was accelerated by reading each other’s curriculum guides and visiting sites to see each other’s programs being implemented. In other words, reading each other’s chapters and journal articles was a good start. However, seeing each other’s work first-hand was a critical step to enhance our understanding and improve our future work. This brings me to recommendation for next steps to foster international collaboration.

I begin with an observation that might not be surprising coming from someone who has worked in fields related to social and emotional learning for 40 years. Relationships matter! With that as a foundation, here are two action steps to consider. Let us meet each other in person at an international conference on SEL research, practice, and policy. Also, let us establish exchange programs where teams of scholars and practitioners visit different countries on multiple occasions or for extended periods of time to learn more about our achievements and challenges—especially focusing on program implementation and assessment for continuous improvement.

In closing, I highlight two reasons why it is important for countries around the world to embrace SEL energetically and also with a constructively critical eye. First, we want to educate our young people to have the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to navigate daily challenges now and in the future as successfully as possible. In this respect, for example, SEL provides an important foundation for the four Desired Outcomes of Education established by the Singapore Ministry of Education which are to be the following: (a) a confident person who has a strong sense of right and wrong, (b) a self-directed learner who questions, reflects, and perseveres in the pursuit of learning, (c) an active contributor who works effectively with others and strives for excellence, and (d) a concerned citizen who participates actively in bettering the lives of others locally, nationally, and internationally (Liem et al. 2017). This leads to a second set of considerations that concern all citizens of the world. We live in a fast-changing and multi-cultural world that brings possibilities for good life opportunities but also dangerous threats. SEL competencies—that emphasize social awareness, compassion, collaboration, communication, and responsible decision-making—offer critical ingredients that are foundational for a bright future for more people. We must establish education systems and experiences worldwide to ensure that young people master these abilities.

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Introduction

There is a growing awareness of the importance of addressing students' social and emotional development and well-being during schooling (e.g. Durlak et al. 2011). Although the bulk of the work in this area has been conducted in North America (e.g. Cook et al. 2000; Rimm-Kaufmann et al. 2014; Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015) and the United Kingdom and Europe (e.g. Banerjee et al. 2014), there is burgeoning interest in this topic in Australia and the Asia-Pacific (e.g. Ee and Ong 2014; Myles-Pallister et al. 2014). This book provides a timely and much-needed opportunity to bring together diverse perspectives and approaches to SEL that are relevant to the Australia Asian-Pacific region.

Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific harnesses wide-ranging perspectives on social emotional learning (SEL) incorporating formal SEL frameworks (e.g. by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning), as well as cognate views from positive psychology, positive education, resilience and coping, belonging, motivation, and programs such as KidsMatter and Mindmatters. Teacher professional development, pre-service training, and post-initial training are also considered as they contribute to SEL. The volume covers what is happening in Australia and in neighbouring communities such as Singapore, mainland China, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, and Pacific Island nations. The book should be of interest to researchers, teachers, teacher educators, counsellors, and psychologists. The structure of the book makes it easy for the reader to use the most appropriate part or chapter as required.

There are many ways to cluster a range of topics relating to SEL. We have chosen to do that in three parts. Part I presents perspectives from the Australian context. Part II captures the perspectives from the Asia-Pacific region. Part III focuses on programs and approaches in the Australian context. The volume is bookended with two chapters by the editors. The opening Chapter “[Social and Emotional Learning: A Brief Overview and Issues Relevant to Australia and the Asia-Pacific](#)” provides an overview of the area of SEL, important contextual information relevant to SEL practice and research in Australia and the Asia-Pacific, and a discussion of research implications for the region.

In Part I, the relationship between SEC and academic outcomes is addressed by Tarbetsky, Martin, and Collie in their Chapter “[Social and Emotional Learning, Social and Emotional Competence, and Students’ Academic Outcomes: The Roles of Psychological Need Satisfaction, Adaptability, and Buoyancy](#)”. They consider novel constructs from the psycho-educational literature such as need satisfaction, adaptability, and buoyancy and how they lead to both academic and non-academic beneficial outcomes.

The Chapter by Helen Street, “[Measures of Success: Exploring the Importance of Context in the Delivery of Well-Being and Social and Emotional Learning Programs in Australian Primary and Secondary Schools](#)”, considers issues of teacher competence and school climate in the context of delivering effective SEL.

Frydenberg, Muller and Liang in their Chapter, “[Assessing Students’ Social and Emotional Learning: A Review of the Literature on Assessment Tools and Related Issues](#)”, review the assessment tools that are currently used to measure SEL learning outcomes, and they conclude that whilst there is a need to assess learning outcomes, this is generally done by clinical measurement tools that are time-consuming and costly and do not readily identify whether that which has been taught has been learnt.

The Chapter “[School Belonging and the Role of Social and Emotional Competencies in Fostering an Adolescent’s Sense of Connectedness to Their School](#)”, by Allen, Vella-Broderick and Waters, focuses on connectedness, bonding, and affiliation with school in some detail through a meta-analysis that addresses the links between social and emotional competence and school belonging.

Since the year 2000, positive psychology has become prominent in the Australian context and has been incorporated into educational practice. The Chapter by Slempp, Chin, Kern, Siokou, Loton, Oades, Vella-Brodrick, and Waters, “[Positive Education in Australia: Practice, Measurement, and Future Directions](#)”, sets the scene and addresses the translation of positive psychology into education and the way that is achieved both directly and indirectly in school settings. Like other authors in this volume, they address the importance of rigorous evaluation. In Part III, an exemplar of how positive education has been put into practice at an Australian school, namely Geelong Grammar School, which was the first to adopt positive psychology as a whole school approach, is reported. O’Connor and Cameron in their Chapter “[The Geelong Grammar Positive Psychology Experience](#)”, explore key practice issues around implementation, change management, and engagement, reflecting on the school’s experience. They make the point that for SEL to flourish in Australia, programs will need to continue to evolve flexibly and develop over time.

Whilst good arguments can be made for implementing SEL as a whole of school program, there is also a place for considering the benefits of SEL for specific populations. This can be achieved as an extension of a universal program. Examples of this relate to specific populations such as those at risk in the educational and learning sphere and those who are gifted. Martin, Cumming, O’Neill, and

Strnadová address the theme of young people with special needs in their Chapter “[Social and Emotional Competence and At-Risk Children’s Well-Being: The Roles of Personal and Interpersonal Agency for Children with ADHD, Emotional and Behavioural Disorder, Learning Disability, and Development Disability](#)”. For each of four at-risk groups—children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), emotional and behavioural disorder, learning disability, and developmental disability—the chapter identifies personal and interpersonal agency factors that are critical to well-being.

Gifted young people are also considered in this volume. It is not uncommon for these students to be underachievers with diverse needs that include emotional dissonance following asynchronous development in cognitive and social emotional domains. This is addressed by Smith, in her Chapter “[Responding to the Unique Social and Emotional Learning Needs of Gifted Australian Students](#)”.

The theme of teacher well-being is introduced by Collie in her Chapter “[Teachers’ Social and Emotional Competence: Links with Social and Emotional Learning and Positive Workplace Outcomes](#)”, where she makes the point that SEL outcome research has generally focused on students, but that a case can be made for considering SEL outcomes for both students and teachers.

Part II focuses on the perspectives from the Asia-Pacific context, with a selection of communities in the Asia-Pacific region being represented, namely Singapore, mainland China and Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, and other Pacific nations. Of particular interest are communities such as Singapore and Hong Kong which traditionally have had a strong emphasis on formal academic outcomes. In Singapore, Liem, Chua, Seng, Kamarolzaman, and Cai with their Chapter “[Social and Emotional Learning in Singapore’s Schools: Framework, Practice, Research, and Future Directions](#)”, detail how since 2005 there has been a SEL framework introduced by the Singaporean Ministry of Education that emphasises core moral values such as respect, responsibility, integrity, care, resilience, and harmony. These are complemented by what they describe as twenty-first century skills of civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills, critical and inventive thinking, and communication, collaboration, and information skills. The emphasis is also uniquely on the well-being of others in the community and society generally.

In China, a two-pronged approach to SEL is outlined by Yu and Jiang in their Chapter “[Social and Emotional Learning in China: Theory, Research, and Practice](#)”. This chapter focuses on systemic efforts to engage students in safe and supportive classrooms which are “optimally challenging” so the focus remains strongly directed to educational outcomes.

That Chapter is complemented by Wu and Mok’s work from Hong Kong titled, “[Social and Emotional Learning and Personal Best Goals in Hong Kong](#)”. In the chapter, they point out that whilst there is no explicit territory-wide SEL policy, the emphasis on personal best goals is making inroads into the “nurturing the self” aspects of the curriculum. As in Singapore, Korea is starting to focus on what is termed the “whole child” with a Character Education Promotion Act (CEPA) driven by the surge in adolescent problems relating to depression, suicide, bullying, harassment, and delinquency. These developments are addressed by Lee and Bong

in their Chapter “[Social and Emotional Learning as a Solution for Adolescent Problems in Korea](#)”.

Two further chapters from the Pacific region represent culturally diverse settings. The Chapter from Lagi and Armstrong “[The Integration of Social and Emotional Learning and Traditional Knowledge Approaches to Learning and Education in the Pacific](#)” describes how explicit and implicit practices in their classroom complement the traditional knowledge approaches (TKA) with the goal of increasing student engagement through skills that include collaboration and empathy. The authors point out that these approaches need to be tackled through teacher education.

In the final chapter of this part Macfarlane, Macfarlane, Graham, and Clarke consider the New Zealand context in their Chapter “[Social and Emotional Learning and Indigenous Ideologies in Aotearoa New Zealand: A Biaxial Blend](#)”. In particular, they identify how SEL imperatives can be implemented through the Indigenous lens. Practices along these lines enable teachers to attain a clearer vision of their students’ cultural identities and ultimately become more attuned to the way their cultural interactions are able to be played out within learning contexts.

Part III with its focus on intervention leads with a Chapter by Littlefield, Cavanagh, Knapp, and O’Grady, “[KidsMatter: Building the Capacity of Australian Primary Schools and Early Childhood Services to Foster Children’s Social and Emotional Skills and Promote Children’s Mental Health](#)”. The authors describe a program that has targeted mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention and which has had a large take-up across Australia. There is a focus on SEL skills for children and families, and an encouragement that SEL programs need to be evidence-based.

The challenge of accommodating culture within standardised approaches to SEL, particularly with reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, is addressed by Dobia and Roffey in their Chapter “[Respect for Culture: Social and Emotional Learning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth](#)”. The authors also consider programs such as KidsMatter that has an Indigenous adaptation.

There are many additional challenges when it comes to implementation, and some of these are illustrated by Carroll, Bower, Ashman, and Lynn in their Chapter “[Early Secondary High School—A Mindfield® for Social and Emotional Learning](#)”. The chapter focuses on a “train the trainer” approach to implementing the program in a socially disadvantaged area.

Further in Part III, the application of positive psychology and positive education principles identified in Part I is detailed by O’Connor and Cameron in their description of a whole school approach in one school setting in the Chapter “[The Geelong Grammar Positive Psychology Experience](#)”.

Evaluation of SEL programs is also a key consideration, and two chapters address this issue from different perspectives. Frydenberg and Muller, in the Chapter “[SEL Approaches That Have Worked: A Case Study of the Role of Formative Evaluation](#)”

highlight the fact that evaluation can be a process that is incorporated into implementation of SEL to provide ongoing development and improvement.

The next chapter in the volume addresses the issue of SEL in the early years as well as implementation intended to have long-term impact. The Chapter “[Developing Social Emotional Competence in the Early Years](#)”, by Cornell, Kiernan, Kaufman, Dobe, Deans, and Frydenberg describes a body of research that considers both the measurement and implementation of social emotional skills through a newly developed coping skills program. In an ideal world, these young children could be followed throughout their schooling to see how SEL skills are reinforced and maintained and with what results.

Since SEL is very much a feature of educational practice, how teachers are trained to incorporate SEL principles into their educational practice is illustrated by Freeman and Strong in their Chapter “[Building Teacher Capacity to Promote Social and Emotional Learning in Australia](#)”. This piece describes a two-year part-time post graduate program offered to teachers that aims to develop their skills in the social emotional domain. It is about capacity building through a university educational system partnership with a focus on well-being.

Preparation of teachers is of key importance in the SEL domain, and this is further illustrated by Hazel in the Chapter “[From Evidence to Practice: Preparing Teachers for Wellbeing](#)”. A particular program, Response Ability, provides the framework for communicating critical mental health principles, knowledge, and skills to the tertiary education sector.

In Part IV, the volume concludes with a chapter from the editors. The Chapter “[Social and Emotional Learning: Lessons Learned and Opportunities Going Forward](#)”, as the name suggests, considers the chapters in the volume and the foundations they provide regarding the current state of the field in the region, along with directions for future research and practice in the region and beyond.

The reader may choose to focus on one part alone or a single chapter. Each part and chapter has been written as stand-alone where the reader wishes to focus on a particular area (in the case of a part) or a particular topic (in the case of a chapter). Together, the parts and chapters aim to showcase the SEL theory, research, and practice taking place in Australia, the Asia-Pacific—and beyond.

Our acknowledgements and appreciation go to each of our contributing authors. They have shared their research, professional expertise, and insights so willingly and ably. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with them and their contributions to this volume. Their chapters will enrich the educational communities in Australia, the Asia-Pacific and beyond.

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Social and Emotional Learning: A Brief Overview and Issues Relevant to Australia and the Asia-Pacific

Rebecca J. Collie, Andrew J. Martin and Erica Frydenberg

Abstract Social and emotional learning (SEL) involves instructional approaches that endeavour to foster individuals' social and emotional competence and promote classroom and school cultures that are safe, caring, and encourage participation. Over the past two decades, there has been growing interest in schooling that attends not only to students' academic development, but also their social and emotional development. SEL has been recognised as one way to achieve this. The current chapter provides an overview of SEL, including important conceptual underpinnings for the area, key definitions of the five well-accepted social and emotional competencies that are promoted in SEL, and positive student and teacher outcomes associated with effective SEL implementation. The chapter also provides important contextual characteristics relevant to SEL implementation and research in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of important research implications for the region, as well as for the world more broadly. In sum, it is hoped that this chapter will help to extend awareness of and effective practice in SEL to best promote social and emotional competence and healthy school and community climates.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Social and emotional competence · Australia · Asia-Pacific · Research implications

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E. Frydenberg, A.J. Martin and R.J. Collie (eds.), *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3394-0_1

1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, there has been growing interest in schooling that attends not only to students' academic development, but also their social and emotional development (Humphrey 2013; Weissberg, et al. 2015). This is based on a growing literature highlighting the links between healthy social and emotional development and important academic and well-being outcomes (e.g. Durlak et al. 2011; Schonfeld et al. 2015; Sklad et al. 2012), as well as much public interest in the need to develop respectful, constructive, and productive citizens (Denham et al. 2016; Oberle et al. 2016; Weissberg et al. 2015). One approach for addressing and attending to social and emotional development is known as social and emotional learning (SEL). The aim of this chapter is to provide a brief overview on the area of SEL—including its conceptual underpinnings, definitions of key social and emotional competencies, and a discussion of positive outcomes associated with effective SEL implementation. Following this, focus is directed specifically to SEL in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, where important contextual characteristics regarding SEL implementation and research are discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion of several important gaps in knowledge that deserve attention from researchers.

2 Overview of SEL

SEL involves instructional approaches, such as direct instruction, modelling, and practice, that endeavour to foster social and emotional competence (Humphrey et al. 2016; Weissberg et al. 2015). Social and emotional competence (SEC) is the mechanism that individuals use to manage their intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions and experiences effectively (Denham 2006; Rose-Krasnor 1997). SEL also encompasses the promotion of positive classroom and school cultures that are safe, caring, and encourage participation (Humphrey 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015; see also Allen et al. 2017 this volume on the links between SEC and school belonging). SEL is thus relevant with respect to individuals' social and emotional development, but also to the social and emotional climate of classrooms and schools (Oberle et al. 2016; Vadeboncoeur and Collie 2013). Although SEL programming is typically directed at promoting students' SEC, increasing attention is being paid to fostering this among teachers as well (e.g. Jennings et al. 2013; Jennings and Greenberg 2009; see also Collie 2017 this volume).

2.1 *Conceptual Underpinnings of SEL*

In the past few years, several frameworks of SEL have begun to emerge. These have helped to provide important conceptual grounding for the field. The most recent framework is Weissberg et al.'s (2015) model of SEL in educational settings. This model considers the various systematic influences on SEL implementation and outcomes—including at classroom, school, family, community, district/region, state, and national levels.

Classroom-level approaches refer to direct instruction in SEL, embedding SEL throughout the curriculum, and informal infusion of SEL throughout teachers' interactions in the classroom (Weissberg et al. 2015). At the school level, SEL is influenced by policies such as a "fair and equitable" discipline approach, practices such as the creation of norms for respectful interactions among students and teachers (e.g. approaches for anti-bullying), as well as the commitment for SEL by school leadership (including the provision of professional development for teachers and staff; Weissberg et al. 2015). With respect to the family and community, such partnerships provide the opportunity to reinforce the lessons and goals of SEL at home and in the neighbourhood (Weissberg et al. 2015). One form for this is after-school activities that promote youth development (Gullotta 2015). Another example would be parenting programmes such as *Triple P Positive Parenting Program* (Sanders et al. 2000), *The Incredible Years* (Webster-Stratton et al. 2002), *Families Coping: Effective Strategies for You and Your Child* (Frydenberg 2015), and *Parent Management Training* (Pearl 2009). There is an abundance of parenting programmes which incorporate social and emotional skills in the parent-child relationship.

At the jurisdiction level (e.g. district, region), support for SEL is also paramount. This includes commitment for SEL, making resources available, establishing a programming approach for SEL, and creating systems to evaluate and improve SEL approaches applied within schools (Weissberg et al. 2015). At a broader level, state and national government policies and supports also have an influence on SEL programming to the extent that there are SEL-focused learning standards, which highlight what goals and outcomes are expected in SEL among students in different grades (Weissberg et al. 2015). Finally, the model highlights the link between all of these systematic influences on short- and long-term student outcomes such as greater SEC, reduced emotional distress, increased academic performance, increased rates of high school completion, improved mental health, and more engaged citizenship.

Another framework that deserves mention is Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) model of the prosocial classroom. Although this model has several congruencies with the Weissberg et al. (2015) model, it focuses more on the classroom-level influences of SEL. Also important is the model's consideration of the impact of teachers' own SEC and well-being. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) highlight the role that teachers play in promoting effective SEL implementation and creating safe and supportive classroom environments that are essential for students' SEC and

academic development (see also Collie 2017). More precisely, the model highlights that teachers' SEC and well-being are linked with three important classroom-level processes: healthy teacher–student relationships, effective classroom management, and effective implementation of SEL. These classroom processes are, in turn, reciprocally linked with a healthy classroom climate, which leads to positive social, emotional, and academic outcomes among students. Overlaying all these relationships are school and community contextual factors that have an influence in the processes and how they are promoted or thwarted.

Together, these two frameworks highlight the importance of contextual factors in the promotion of SEL, SEC, and ultimately, student outcomes (see also Street 2017 this volume on the importance of context in SEL implementation). Moreover, they highlight the roles played by educators at school, as well as family, community members, administrators, and policy makers beyond school in effective SEL implementation.

2.2 *Social and Emotional Competence*

As noted above, SEL involves programming and approaches designed to promote individuals' SEC, which is essential for both interpersonal and intrapersonal social and emotional functioning, and is a joint product of the individual and his/her social environment (Rose-Krasnor 1997). There are several different approaches for defining and measuring SEC (e.g. see Denham 2006; Weare and Gray 2003; see also Frydenberg et al. 2017 this volume). One widely applied approach is that by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). According to CASEL (e.g. 2013), there are five social and emotional competencies (SECs). These are defined in turn:

- *Self-awareness* refers to individuals' capacity to understand their emotions, goals, and values; know their strengths and weaknesses; possess a sound sense of confidence and optimism; and hold a positive mindset (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015).
- *Self-management* involves individuals' capacity to regulate thoughts, emotions, and behaviours; delay gratification and control impulses; manage stress; and motivate themselves and persevere through challenges (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015).
- *Social awareness* refers to individuals' ability to take others' perspectives (including those from different backgrounds); empathise with and feel compassion for others; understand social norms regarding behaviour; and recognise resources and supports available to them (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015).
- *Relationship skills* involve individuals' capacity to listen effectively, communicate clearly, and cooperate with others; negotiate conflict in appropriate and respectful ways; and seek and offer help as needed (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015).

- *Responsible decision making* involves individuals' capacity to make respectful and constructive choices concerning their behaviour and social interactions in diverse settings; and consider issues of ethics, safety, and well-being for themselves and others, along with the consequences of actions (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015).

Together, the five SECs address a range of social and emotional capacities that are essential for healthy individual development, as well as creating healthy classroom and school climates (CASEL 2013; Oberle et al. 2016; Weissberg et al. 2015).

2.3 *Outcomes of Effective SEL*

As noted above, effective SEL implementation has been associated with a variety of positive outcomes. Looking first at students, it is perhaps not surprising that SEL programming has been positively associated with enhanced SECs given this is a core focus of SEL (Domitrovich et al. 2007; Durlak et al. 2011; Korpershoek et al. 2016). Another key outcome that has been examined is academic performance with researchers linking SEL with enhancements in this area (Durlak et al. 2011; Korpershoek et al. 2016; Schonfeld et al. 2015). Positive attitudes towards oneself, others, and school (e.g. self-concept, school belonging; Durlak et al. 2011; Sklad et al. 2012) and reduced emotional distress (e.g. depression, anxiety; Durlak et al. 2011; Korpershoek et al. 2016; Schick and Cierpka 2005) are other outcomes that have been linked with effective SEL programming. With respect to behavioural outcomes, effective SEL has been shown to bolster prosocial behaviour (e.g. getting on well with others; Durlak et al. 2011; Sklad et al. 2012) and reduce conduct problems (e.g. disruptive classroom behaviour; Durlak et al. 2011). Although the bulk of studies have examined these positive outcomes shortly following the programme, emerging research is also highlighting longer term effects in school (e.g. greater than 7 months; Sklad et al. 2012) and into adulthood (Goodman et al. 2015).

Turning next to teachers, although the empirical research is limited, researchers are beginning to link teacher-focused SEL programmes to important outcomes for teachers including greater well-being, mindfulness, and self-efficacy for teaching (e.g. Jennings et al. 2013; Roeser et al. 2013; see also Collie 2017). Taken together, there is promising evidence of the importance of effective SEL implementation for both students and teachers.

2.4 *Summary*

SEL is a growing field that is receiving increasing attention from educators, researchers, and the public in many countries worldwide (Torrente et al. 2015).

Several conceptual frameworks are now available to guide researchers and practitioners in their work in the area. Moreover, there is burgeoning research providing support for the value of effective SEL implementation.

3 SEL in Australia and the Asia-Pacific

Despite the promising work that is being conducted in the area of SEL, the bulk of this has been conducted in the USA and Europe, highlighting the need for wider attention in different regions of the world. In this volume, focus is directed on shedding light on SEL implementation and research in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. There are several important issues to consider regarding SEL within these locations given that SEL is embedded in the cultural context within which it is taught (Hecht and Shin 2015). Below, pertinent points regarding Australia first, followed by the Asia-Pacific region more broadly, are discussed.

3.1 SEL in Australia

Much like the USA and UK, interest in SEL in Australia has gained momentum over the past decade. Indeed, the importance of students' social and emotional development was highlighted in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008), which established that confident and creative individuals: "have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing"; "develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others"; and "relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships" (p. 9). These core statements have since been embedded into the Australian National Curriculum under personal and social capability, which highlights four capabilities that align with CASEL's (2013) work: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management (ACARA, n.d.). As these key policy documents reveal, there is now endorsement at a national level of the importance attending to the social and emotional development of young Australians.

With respect to how SEL is implemented and approached in Australian schools, Humphrey (2013) indicates that this largely occurs via the national government's KidsMatter and MindMatters initiatives. As described by Littlefield et al. (2017 this volume; see also Dobia and Roffey 2017 this volume), the KidsMatter initiatives—developed for early childhood educational settings and primary school—involve four components for addressing SEL: promoting a positive school community, SEL programming for students, working with parents and carers, and helping children who are experiencing mental health difficulties. Each component is accompanied by a guide that provides details of effective programmes for addressing the core

components. At the secondary level, the MindMatters framework was developed to promote mental health among adolescents. This initiative involves resources and online tools to help schools to create their own mental health strategy (www.mindmatters.edu.au). In addition to these national initiatives, however, Australian researchers have been involved in developing and testing SEL approaches at a programme level (see for example in this volume, Carroll et al. 2017; Cornell et al. 2017; Frydenberg et al. 2017; Frydenberg and Muller 2017; Slemp et al. 2017).

Given the nationwide KidsMatter and MindMatters programmes, Humphrey (2013) contends that the approach towards SEL in Australia is quite centralised. This differs from the approach in the USA, which involves much greater decentralisation due to different state and district policies on education and SEL. The extent to which a country is centralised or decentralised in its SEL approaches has a significant impact on research and implementation. Whereas evaluation of SEL programmes has been a major focus in the USA (because, as Humphrey argues, there is a need for SEL programme creators to justify why their programme is superior to others), there has been less evaluation occurring in countries like Australia (however, see Slee et al.'s 2009, 2012 evaluation of KidsMatter). This is an important contextual characteristic when considering the SEL research and practice in the Australian context, as well as directions for future research (discussed below).

Another point made by Humphrey (2013) is that in Australia there is quite a lot of flexibility in how SEL is implemented, which contrasts an often more rigid approach in the USA. Indeed, this is demonstrated via the KidsMatter and MindMatters initiatives and their provision of a list of resources from which schools can pick and choose to best suit their needs and circumstances. Together then, there are several important considerations when interpreting and examining how SEL is implemented in Australia and for understanding the approaches that have been taken and areas for future research. Despite this, it is clear that there is a growing interest in SEL and its importance for healthy development among Australian students.

3.2 SEL in the Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific region of the globe comprises a diverse array of countries and cultures. Although the Asia-Pacific region includes all countries that border the Pacific Ocean, in this volume the focus is on several countries: mainland China and Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, and several Pacific Islands.

One broad way in which to differentiate different cultures in this region is via their individualistic or collectivist focus. Individualistic societies tend to emphasise the individual, whereas collectivist societies emphasise the group (Hofstede 1983). Hecht and Shin (2015) suggest this cultural difference may impact the relevance or relative promotion of the five different SECs. For example, self-awareness and self-management may be more salient in individualistic cultures (e.g. regulating

one's own emotions), whereas social awareness and relationships skills are more salient in collectivist cultures (e.g. getting along well with others). This difference likely impacts the SECs that are addressed and focused on in different countries and contexts in the Asia-Pacific, as well as how they are taught (in groups versus individual activities; Hecht and Shin 2015). The chapters in this volume provide context-specific examples that speak to this (e.g. see Macfarlane et al. 2017 for Indigenous perspectives from New Zealand).

In a review of SEL across multiple countries, Torrente et al. (2015) highlight some further considerations when examining cross-cultural differences. First, they suggest that several Asian countries recognise the need to transform traditional academic-focused education systems to better meet the challenges of the twenty-first century (see also Liem et al. 2017, Wu et al. 2017, both this volume). SEL is seen as one avenue for helping to make this transformation (Torrente et al. 2015) and for supporting students to become resilient citizens (Humphrey 2013). Thus, there is increasing interest in SEL in Asian countries to match the interest growing in the rest of the world.

Second, SEL has been approached in various ways. Whereas Australia (see Littlefield et al. 2017) and Singapore (see Liem et al. 2017) harness the CASEL (2013) framework in their educational policies towards SEL, different approaches are evident in other countries (see for example Lagi and Armstrong 2017 this volume regarding Pacific Island Nations, and Macfarlane et al. 2017 regarding Indigenous ideologies in New Zealand). Indeed, Torrente et al. (2015) examined SEL-related policies and found that SEL tended to be addressed via citizenship and values education in many Asian countries. For example, in China moral and character education has been integrated into national curricula to produce rounded, ethical, and patriotic citizens (Dello-Iacovo 2009). Yu and Jiang (2017) provide further details of this in mainland China. In addition, Lee and Bong (2017 this volume) describe recently introduced national policy on character education in Korea that has relevance to SEL.

Third, although countries in the region have educational policies that appear to promote skills and competencies relevant to SEL, the extent to which this is backed up with practical recommendations and procedures remains somewhat unclear (Torrente et al. 2015). Thus, there is a need to delve more specifically into SEL practices that are occurring in the region—and this volume provides an opportunity to do this (see for example, Wu and Mok 2017 for how SEL is being implemented in the Hong Kong Catholic education system and Liem et al. 2017 regarding Singapore's efforts).

Finally, Torrente et al. (2015) and Humphrey (2013) argue that not enough evidence-based practice or evaluations of SEL approaches are conducted in the region. As noted above, it is possible that this is due to the centralisation of national policies (Humphrey 2013), but may also be due to a more nascent interest in SEL in this region. In terms of evaluation work being carried out, details of recent approaches are evident in Hong Kong (Wu and Mok 2017), Korea (Lee and Bong 2017), and Singapore (Liem et al. 2017).

3.3 *Summary*

In sum, there are regional and contextual characteristics and differences that are important to consider when investigating the state of SEL in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Nonetheless, there appears to be broad interest in promoting the social and emotional development of students alongside more traditional academic foci (Humphrey 2013; Torrente et al. 2015). Torrente et al. (2015) call for greater cross-country collaboration within (and beyond) the region to promote SEL: “Whereas the diversity in approaches can be enriching, that potential can only be realized if lessons are shared in a systematic way” (p. 581). The current volume provides an important step in this process by considering perspectives and programmes across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

4 **Gaps and Future Directions**

When looking at the contextual characteristics relevant to SEL implementation and research in Australia and the Asia-Pacific, two key gaps that provide a guide for future directions are evident. First, there is a need for more work on the impact of individual programmes specific to the region (see for example O’Connor and Cameron 2017 this volume for the implementation of one programme in an Australian school). As noted above with respect to both Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, more evaluation work is another central issue for the region in order to ensure that programmes are delivering positive outcomes to students, teachers, and schools (see Frydenberg and Muller 2017 for one example of challenges regarding evaluation of SEL).

In addition to these issues specific to Australia and the Asia-Pacific, there are also gaps in knowledge surrounding SEL that are relevant to countries worldwide. There is a need for more research examining the relevance and influence of SEL among unique populations to understand the extent to which mainstream and/or targeted efforts are the most effective approaches for promoting SEC among different subgroups of students (e.g. Indigenous students, at-risk students, gifted students; see Dobia and Roffey 2017; Martin et al. 2017; Smith 2017 all this volume). Only briefly touched upon in this chapter is the work examining SEL and SEC with respect to teachers. This includes teachers’ skills in implementing SEL effectively, their ability to create a positive and supportive classroom (and school) climate, and their own SEC and well-being. Several chapters in this volume consider this important issue (see Collie 2017; Hazel 2017; Freeman and Strong 2017) and more work in this area is essential for ensuring that SEL is most effectively promoted. Finally, conceptual grounding for the area of SEL is growing as evidenced by emerging frameworks and models (e.g. Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Weissberg et al. 2015). The area of SEL may also benefit from harnessing long-standing theoretical and empirical work from education and educational

psychology more broadly to bolster understanding of the foundations of SEL and SEC and how they are associated with important student and teacher outcomes (see Martin et al. 2017 this volume for more on this issue; see also Tarbetsky et al. 2017 this volume). In sum, addressing these gaps is essential for the continuing growth of SEL and to ensure the aims of fostering SEC and healthy school and community climates, and creating healthy and productive citizens are achieved.

5 Conclusion

The current chapter has provided an overview of SEL including important conceptual underpinnings for the area, key definitions of the five well-accepted SECs that are promoted in SEL, and positive student and teacher outcomes associated with effective SEL implementation. From prior research, it is clear that SEL is relevant to developing healthy and constructive members of society. While the majority of research has been conducted in the USA, Europe and UK, there is growing recognition for the importance of SEL in other areas of the world. The current chapter has provided some important contextual characteristics relevant to SEL implementation and research in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. In sum, it is hoped that this chapter (and the volume) will help to extend awareness of and effective practice in SEL in the region and beyond.

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Part I
Perspectives from Australia

Social and Emotional Learning, Social and Emotional Competence, and Students' Academic Outcomes: The Roles of Psychological Need Satisfaction, Adaptability, and Buoyancy

Ana L. Tarbetsky, Andrew J. Martin and Rebecca J. Collie

Abstract This chapter explores the possible relationships between students' social and emotional competencies, motivation, engagement, and achievement in the context of an autonomy-supportive environment. At the core of students' social and emotional learning are social and emotional competencies (SECs; e.g., social awareness, relationship skills). The present chapter broadens the view on SECs by considering novel constructs from the psycho-educational literature: basic psychological need satisfaction, adaptability, and academic buoyancy. Importantly, when SECs are effectively taught it leads to positive academic and non-academic outcomes. With the aim of promoting these positive outcomes, researchers have endeavored to better understand the climates that promote students' SECs. Harnessing perspectives from social and emotional learning, self-determination theory, and the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, we propose an autonomy-supportive environment as one that can promote the SECs. We further contend that by supporting SECs through an autonomy-supportive environment, motivation, engagement, and achievement can be positively influenced. Finally, given the hypothesized relationships, this chapter also briefly reviews avenues for further development of students' SECs, and more generally, their social and emotional learning.

Keywords Social and emotional competence · Basic psychological needs · Adaptability · Academic buoyancy · Autonomy support · Student outcomes

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1 The Roles of Psychological Need Satisfaction, Adaptability, and Buoyancy

Social and emotional learning (SEL) involves instructional approaches aimed at developing students’ social and emotional competencies (SECs; Weissberg et al. 2015). In addition to fostering these via instruction, SEL also promotes students’ SECs through the establishment of “positive classroom/school cultures, climates, and conditions for learning that are safe, caring, cooperative, well managed, and participatory” (Weissberg et al. 2015, p. 6). The present chapter concentrates on this latter aspect of SEL and broadens the view on SECs by considering novel constructs from the psycho-educational literature as three such SECs: basic psychological need satisfaction (of autonomy, competence, and relatedness; Deci and Ryan 2012), adaptability (students’ ability to adjust cognitions, behaviors, and emotions to deal with new, changing, or uncertain situations; Martin et al. 2012, 2013), and academic buoyancy (students’ ability to successfully navigate academic challenges and setbacks; Martin and Marsh 2008a). More precisely, the chapter looks at the impact of the classroom’s social-emotional climate on students’ SECs and, in turn, their educational outcomes. The proposed process is shown in Fig. 1.

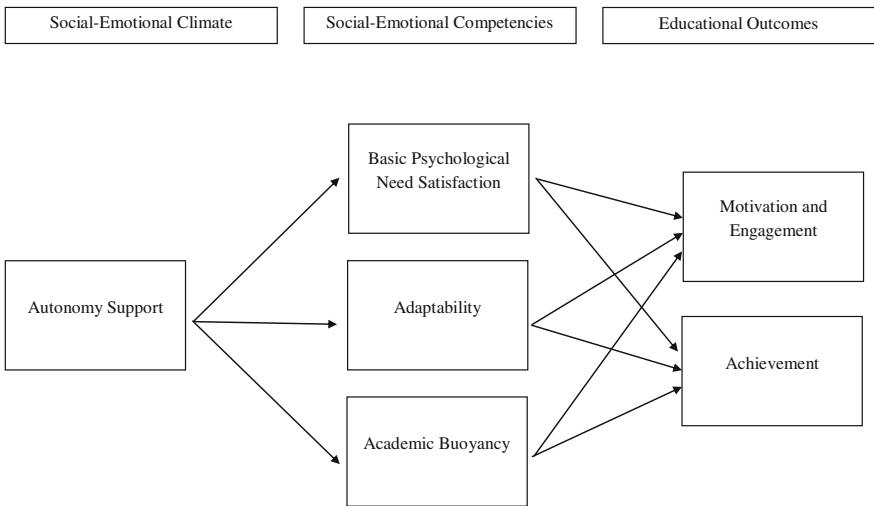


Fig. 1 A proposed SEL process of **a** autonomy support, **b** psychological need satisfaction, adaptability, buoyancy, and **c** motivation, engagement, and achievement. *Note* Although we include directional arrows, interventions can be independent of each other and need not be applied in sequence to be effective. There is scope for these interventions to be combined or applied in a way that addresses factors occurring earlier in the process (e.g., autonomy support) than other factors (e.g., adaptability)

2 Conceptual Overview

In exploring SECs and their connections, we draw together conceptualizing in the areas of SEL and self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 2012). As noted above, SEL involves instructional approaches aimed at fostering students' SECs. According to the Collaborative for Social, Academic, and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2013), there are five core SEL competencies: self-awareness (i.e., recognizing one's emotions and thoughts and how they influence behavior, motivation, confidence, optimism, and knowing one's strengths and limitations), self-management (i.e., regulating cognitions, behaviors, and emotions effectively such as managing stress and impulses, motivating oneself, and working toward adaptive goals), social awareness (i.e., taking others' perspectives, empathizing with others, and recognizing resources and supports), relationship skills (i.e., establishing and maintaining high-quality relationships such as through effectively communicating, listening, cooperating, negotiating, and/or helping), and responsible decision making (i.e., making constructive and respectful choices, goal setting and striving, considering the well-being of others and self, and understanding ethical standards, social norms, and consequences of actions; see also Weissberg et al. 2015).

These five competencies are promoted by SEL instruction, as well as in the classroom, school, family, and community (Weissberg et al. 2015). In the classroom, SEL involves teaching and modeling SECs as well as providing appropriate opportunities for students to practice and apply these skills (Weissberg et al. 2015). Students' social and emotional development is also fostered by positive teacher-student interactions that create a supportive classroom environment—one that offers emotional support and provides opportunities for mastery experiences and feelings of autonomy (Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Weissberg et al. 2015). In turn, SEL and the development of SECs are linked with positive academic outcomes among students such as motivation, engagement, and achievement (e.g., Durlak et al. 2015; Durlak et al. 2011; Humphrey, 2013; Rhoades et al. 2011; Schonfeld et al. 2014).

Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci and Ryan 1985, 1991, 2002; Ryan and Deci 2000, 2002) has relevant alignments with and contributions to current the understanding of SEL. SDT posits that people are, by nature, active and self-motivated; yet, in some circumstances, they can also feel alienated and controlled. In any given context, how an individual is placed with regard to these experiences can either facilitate or impede their motivation and sense of self-determination (e.g., Deci and Ryan 1985, 1991). With respect to education, SDT assumes that students possess inherent growth tendencies and psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) which promote optimal functioning, academic engagement, constructive social development, and personal well-being (Deci and Ryan 1985, 1991, 2002; Ryan and Deci 2000). SEL and SDT are aligned in that they posit that individuals learn more effectively when they have more positive affect and a high sense of efficacy, feel respected and a sense of belonging at school, and perceive that people at school have their best interests at heart (Bryk and Schneider 2002; Dweck 2006; Jennings and Greenberg 2009;

Noddings 2005). Moreover, SDT provides a framework for understanding individuals' motivation and healthy functioning, and by implication, how this may be supported from an SEL perspective.

Finally, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson 2001) also lends itself to SEL. Broaden-and-build theory contends that particular emotions can positively impact momentary thought-action repertoires and in so doing increase an individual's social and psychological personal resources (Fredrickson 2001). In other words, these positive emotions widen the array of cognitions and behaviors that a person has and can use (Fredrickson 2001). In the context of this chapter, adaptability and academic buoyancy require adaptation of cognition, behavior, and/or emotion to respond to new and novel situations and setback (e.g., Martin et al. 2013). Having a large repertoire of cognitions and behaviors can aid in responding to different and novel situations. In terms of outcomes, these emotions broaden the scopes of attention and cognition, enable flexible and creative thinking, and potentially enhance coping skills (Fredrickson 2001). Thus, an environment that supports these positive emotions, such as an autonomy-supportive one, has the potential to positively influence students' adaptability and academic buoyancy (and possibly their basic psychological need satisfaction as well)—and subsequently a variety of academic and non-academic outcomes. In the sections to follow, we harness knowledge from SEL, SDT, and broaden-and-build theory to introduce the process shown in Fig. 1.

2.1 Autonomy Support

Autonomy support is a core aspect of SDT (Deci and Ryan 1985) that concerns how individuals' motivation can be supported. Autonomy support refers to “an interpersonal behavior that one person adopts toward another, in view of promoting the latter's willful intentions and psychological needs” (Sarrazin, Leroy, Bressoux, Sarrazin and Trouilloud 2007, p. 530). With respect to the educational context, autonomy support is conceptualized as the emotional and behavioral support that teachers provide to identify, nurture, and support students' volition and sense of autonomy (e.g., Reeve 2006; Reeve et al. 2004; Reeve and Jang 2006). With respect to SEL, autonomy support is an important determinant of the classroom's social and emotional climate and likely influences the quality of teacher–student relationships in the classroom. Autonomy-supportive practices include actions such as providing explanatory rationales for a particular task or activity, providing choice in a given task or activity, and acknowledging students' expressions of positive or negative affect (e.g., Deci and Ryan 1985, 2008b, 2012; Reeve 2006, 2009). As noted above, the classroom climate and healthy teacher–student relationships both play an important role in fostering students' SECs (Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Weissberg et al. 2015; Williford and Sanger Wolcott 2015). In the following sections, we describe the three SECs under focus in this chapter: psychological need satisfaction, adaptability, and academic buoyancy.

2.2 *Basic Psychological Needs*

Within SDT (Deci and Ryan 1985), satisfaction of basic psychological needs is posited as essential to growth, healthy psychological development, optimal functioning, and well-being (Deci and Ryan 2000; Ryan 1995). These psychological needs are considered general and widely applicable due to their expression across gender, age, social class, personality, and culture (Deci and Ryan 2000, 2002, 2008a; Vansteenkiste et al. 2010). Three basic psychological needs have been identified: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the degree of volition and control in one's actions and behaviors (DeCharms 1968; Niemiec and Ryan 2009). Relatedness refers to the connection, support, and care by and for others (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Niemiec and Ryan 2009). Competence or efficacy (for clarity, we refer to competence as efficacy hereafter) refers to one's sense of capability in performing tasks of varying difficulty (Niemiec and Ryan 2009; White 1959).

The three basic psychological needs are aligned with the five core SELs described by CASEL (2013). A sense of autonomy and efficacy are relevant to self-awareness (e.g., recognizing one's strengths and limitations), self-management (e.g., motivating oneself), and responsible decision making (e.g., making constructive choices). For example, if a student is given an assignment in which she has to answer four out of the five questions, she will likely evaluate which questions she can answer best and choose those four to respond to. Finally, a sense of relatedness reflects the core SEL competency of relationship skills. For example, if a student feels a sense of connectedness and belonging in a group project, he/she may be more willing to communicate with, listen to, and cooperate with the group to complete the project. Thus, basic psychological need satisfaction seems important to consider when understanding students' SEL.

Of note, the three basic psychological needs have been linked to a number of positive psychological, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. Relevant to an SEL perspective, the satisfaction of these three needs is seen as promoting autonomous motivation, increasing students' bonding to school, and bolstering their achievement (Brock et al. 2008; Ryan and Deci 2000). Students' sense of autonomy is associated with "greater flexibility in problem solving, more efficient knowledge acquisition, and a strong sense of personal worth and social responsibility" (Deci et al. 1991, pp. 325–326). In addition, a sense of autonomy is positively associated with intrinsic motivation (e.g., Deci and Ryan 1985). A sense of efficacy is associated with goal commitment and goal progress (Schüler et al. 2010), enhanced intrinsic motivation (e.g., Deci 1971), adaptive behavior change, and increased learning (Deci et al. 1996). Finally, a sense of relatedness is associated with greater classroom engagement (Reeve 2006), positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem (Connell and Wellborn 1991), and enhanced persistence, goal striving, and self-regulation (Martin and Dowson 2009). Therefore, the satisfaction of these needs appears to play a central role in promoting individuals' self-determination and optimal functioning.

2.3 *Adaptability*

Adaptability focuses on the extent to which an individual is able to navigate change, uncertainty, and novelty (e.g., beginning a new school, starting or changing jobs, getting married, having children, or retiring; Martin et al. 2012, 2013). Adaptability has been positioned as a sub-construct of self-regulation (Martin et al. 2013). Unlike self-regulation which tends to focus on cognitive and behavioral regulation, however, recent conceptions of adaptability have added emotional regulation to the framework (Martin et al. 2012, 2013). This reflects research surrounding the broaden-and-build theory of emotions which suggests that individuals are more likely to approach and explore novel objects and situations if they experience mild positive affect frequently (Fredrickson 2001). Thus, adaptability is defined as “an individual’s ability to effectively navigate change, uncertainty, and novelty by regulating and monitoring cognitive, behavioral, and emotional responses” (Burns and Martin 2014, p. 227). Cognitive adaptability involves modifying one’s thoughts; behavioral adaptability involves modifying the nature, level, and degree of action; and emotional adaptability involves modifying one’s (positive and negative) feelings—all aimed at effectively dealing with change, uncertainty, and novelty (Burns and Martin 2014; Martin and Burns 2014; Martin et al. 2012, 2013, 2014).

As this definition suggests, clear links can be seen between adaptability and the core SEL competency of self-management (e.g., regulating one’s thoughts, behaviors, and emotions; CASEL 2013). Of note, research has shown that adaptability is correlated with a number of positive academic and non-academic outcomes, including academic achievement, enjoyment of school, satisfaction with life, and a sense of meaning and purpose (Martin 2007; Martin et al. 2012, 2013, 2014; Wrosch and Scheier 2003). Martin et al. (2013) added that a student’s capacity to keep up with and participate in school and their willingness to consider more ambitious and positive future selves will in part depend on their adaptability. Most recently, research has shown that adaptability may be particularly appropriate in reducing failure experiences and failure dynamics (e.g., anxiety, performance avoidance, self-handicapping, and disengagement; Martin et al. 2015). Adaptability has thus shown to be an important concept to consider in students’ academic lives, with early findings suggesting it to be important for further investigation.

2.4 *Academic Buoyancy*

Alongside the capacity to navigate change and uncertainty, it is also important for students to navigate adversity and challenge in their academic lives. For example, SEL theorists acknowledge that “depending on the student and unique factors, stressors may combine in ways that are beneficial, tolerable, or toxic to a child’s learning and development” (Meiklejohn et al. 2012, p. 296; see also

Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015). Students' positive response to everyday academic challenges (e.g., poor performance, competing deadlines, performance pressure, or difficult tasks) is the focus of academic buoyancy (Martin and Marsh 2008a; Miller et al. 2013; Putwain et al. 2012). Specifically, academic buoyancy is defined as students' capacity to successfully overcome setback, challenge, and adversity that are typical of the ordinary course of academic life (Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008a, b, 2009). In that sense, it is also sometimes referred to as "everyday resilience" (Parker and Martin 2009). Broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson 2001) contends that the ability to be resilient (a cognate-correlate of academic buoyancy) stems from a person's ability to cultivate experiences of positive emotions at opportune times. Thus, a focus on students' SEL has relevance to students' academic buoyancy by emphasizing positive emotions. With regard to the five core SECs, academic buoyancy is relevant to self-management (e.g., managing thoughts and emotions to navigate stress) and responsible decision making (e.g., making constructive choices to overcome difficulties).

Research has shown that academic buoyancy is positively related to several important SEL-related outcomes including general self-esteem (Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008a; Miller et al. 2013), greater persistence (Martin et al. 2010), and greater planning (Martin et al. 2010). Research has also shown that academic buoyancy is associated with lower levels of test-irrelevant thought (Malmberg et al. 2013), tension (Malmberg et al. 2013; Putwain et al. 2012; Putwain and Daly 2013), academic anxiety (e.g., Putwain and Daly 2013), emotional instability (Martin et al. 2013), and uncertain control (Martin 2013; Putwain et al. 2012). Data from a longitudinal study found that students who were unable to successfully navigate the setbacks and challenges characterized by the transition to secondary school had lower levels of engagement, learning motivation, and performance (Doddington et al. 1999). Thus, being buoyant appears to be important for minimizing many negative experiences that can impede learning and achievement and, as such, is a construct that is clearly relevant to students' adaptive academic and non-academic functioning, including their social and emotional development.

2.5 Educational Outcomes

Motivation, engagement, and achievement are some of the most studied constructs in the psycho-educational literature. Motivation and engagement are defined here as students' inclination and drive to learn, work effectively, and achieve to potential—and the behaviors that accompany these (e.g., self-efficacy, valuing, persistence, anxiety; for reviews, see Liem and Martin 2011; Martin 2007, 2009; Reschly and Christenson 2012; Schunk et al. 2012; Schunk and Miller 2002). Decades of research have been dedicated to investigating students' motivation and engagement, consistently noting its significance for students' academic well-being (e.g., Liem and Martin 2012; Martin 2009; Martin et al. 2015). For example, motivation and engagement positively impact school enjoyment, educational aspirations, and

positive participation in addition to other academic well-being indicators such as achievement (see Liem and Martin 2012 for a review).

With regard to achievement, numeracy and literacy are often salient indicators in educational research (e.g., Marks and Ainley 1997; Marks et al. 2000) and in national examinations (Australian Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting Authority 2011; Department of Basic Education 2014). In Australia, for example, standardized literacy and numeracy is evaluated by the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN; Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2011). Through NAPLAN, major dimensions of educational advantage and disadvantage have been identified (Rothman and McMillan 2003). NAPLAN has revealed that students in Year 9 with numeracy and literacy scores one standard deviation above the mean are more than two times more likely to participate in higher education than students with average scores (Marks et al. 2000). Further, students in Year 9 with numeracy and literacy scores that are one standard deviation below the mean are two times more likely to drop out of school (McMillan and Marks 2003). Not only does achievement affect educational outcomes, the successful transition to full-time employment, type of occupation, and income level are also significantly associated with prior numeracy and literacy achievement (Rothman and McMillan 2003). On a broader level, community participation, engagement in lifelong learning, and health are all linked with numeracy and literacy (Rothman and McMillan 2003). Taken together, students' motivation, engagement, and achievement in school are major factors relevant to their lives while at school and relevant to their post-school pathways. Figure 1 demonstrates these outcomes in the educational process, following from the social and emotional climate and SECs.

3 Linking the Central Constructs

In the previous section, we introduced the SECs under focus in this chapter. In this next section and with reference to conceptual and empirical work, we discuss how these different factors are associated to reflect the educational process shown in Fig. 1. To begin, we discuss the links between autonomy support and the three SECs: basic psychological need satisfaction, adaptability, and academic buoyancy. Following that, we discuss associations between the SECs and the educational outcomes.

3.1 *Linking Autonomy Support and the SECs and Educational Outcomes*

Links with the basic psychological needs. It has been well documented that an autonomy-supportive learning environment facilitates the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, efficacy, and relatedness among students

(e.g., Deci and Ryan 2012; Haerens et al. 2015; Turner et al. 2014). Thus, for example, if an autonomy-supportive teacher allows students a sense of choice and volition in their studies, this promotes students' autonomy. If that teacher also provides effective and constructive feedback, it helps the student feel more capable to complete that task and ultimately, feel more competent. Further, if that teacher also understands the student's perspective, it is likely the teacher is better able to relate to the student and better promote the student's sense of connection in the classroom. Indeed, the relationship between these variables is also consistent with formal SEL theorizing. The classroom's social and emotional climate (which is fostered by autonomy support) is linked with effective SEL implementation and the development of students' SECs (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). Taken together, autonomy-supportive learning environments and their support for students' basic psychological need satisfaction can be considered important bases for the promotion and maintenance of SECs in the academic context.

Links with adaptability. Although research into the direct association between autonomy support and adaptability has only just begun (Collie and Martin 2017), more established research investigating self-regulation (the umbrella construct under which adaptability resides; Burns and Martin 2014; Martin et al. 2012, 2013, 2014) does provide some indication of how the two may be connected. Researchers have found that when teachers facilitate and guide learning, use non-threatening evaluation practices, provide a choice of tasks, and provide thorough explanations (all autonomy-supportive practices), students demonstrate higher levels of self-regulation (Brown and Campione 1994; Eshel and Kohavi 2003; Pintrich et al. 1994). Indeed, Sierens et al. (2009) found a significant association between autonomy support and self-regulated learning. Given this prior work and the conceptual relatedness between adaptability and self-regulation, we posit a positive association between autonomy support and adaptability. We suggest that in order to regulate cognition, behavior, and emotion in the face of change and uncertainty, significant personal agency and autonomous regulation are required (see also Martin et al. 2012). Given that personal agency and autonomous regulation are promoted in an autonomy-supportive environment (Reeve 2009), such environments likely support students' capacity to adapt to uncertainty and novelty. Moreover, given the links between adaptability and the core SEL competency of self-management, this is relevant to SEL-related outcomes.

Links with academic buoyancy. We also suggest an important connection between autonomy support and students' academic buoyancy. Recall, academic buoyancy refers to students' ability to overcome setbacks and challenges that characterize everyday academic life (e.g., Martin 2014; Martin and Marsh 2009). Researchers suggest that teacher–student relationships play a key role in influencing students' development of academic buoyancy (Martin and Marsh 2009). When teachers seek out, listen to, and value students' opinions and perspectives, the students may be committed to overcoming the setbacks and challenges which characterize their learning (Furrer et al. 2014). These behaviors are among those which help to foster an autonomy-supportive environment (Reeve 2006). More generally this suggests that autonomy support influences students' capacities and

abilities to be academically buoyant. Collie et al. (2015) further contend that autonomy support is one approach teachers can use to spur students' academic buoyancy, achievement, and control.

Preliminary empirical findings support this contention. For example, research has shown that when students perceive they have a sense of control over their future academic outcomes, they are more likely to report academic buoyancy (Collie et al. 2015; Martin et al. 2010; Martin and Marsh 2006). Given that a sense of perceived control among students is a hallmark of autonomy-supportive teaching (e.g., Collie et al. 2015; Deci and Ryan 2012; Leptokaridou et al. 2014; Vansteenkiste et al. 2010), it may be argued that an autonomy-supportive learning environment is likely to promote academic buoyancy. Thus, autonomy-supportive environments promote students' academic buoyancy (through an increased sense of control)—a capacity relevant to students' social and emotional development.

Links with the Educational Outcomes. Although the proposed model in Fig. 1 focuses on the relationship between autonomy support and SECs and the relationship between the SECs and the educational outcomes, it is appropriate to briefly address the possible direct link between autonomy support and the educational outcomes. Autonomy-supportive teaching is positively associated with many educational outcomes including students' motivation, engagement, and achievement (e.g., Deci et al. 1991; Reeve 2002; Ryan and Deci 2000). In terms of motivation, research has shown that students in an autonomy-supportive classroom have higher levels of autonomous motivation (Deci et al. 1994; Deci and Ryan 2008b; Reeve et al. 1999; Vallerand et al. 1997; see also Reeve 2002; Ryan and Deci 2000, for reviews). Additionally, students in an autonomy-supportive classroom show higher levels of active engagement both behaviorally and cognitively (Deci et al. 1991, 1996; Jang 2008; Reeve et al. 2004). Finally, students in an autonomy-supportive classroom tend to have greater conceptual understanding (e.g., Vansteenkiste et al. 2005), enhanced creativity (e.g., Benita et al. 2014), better academic performance (Boggiano et al. 1993), and high academic achievement (Flink et al. 1992). Thus, it is possible that there is also a direct link between autonomy support and educational outcomes, in addition to the proposed relationships in Fig. 1.

3.2 *Linking the SECs with the Educational Outcomes*

Basic psychological needs and the outcomes. There is evidence that basic psychological need satisfaction impacts motivation, engagement, and achievement. For example, psychological need satisfaction has been consistently linked with intrinsic motivation (e.g., Vansteenkiste et al. 2010). Other researchers have found that autonomy, efficacy, and relatedness are associated with a mastery orientation, as evaluated through students' mastery goals (Reeve and Lee 2014). It has also been demonstrated that need satisfaction is negatively associated with anxiety (e.g., Deci et al. 2001).

In addition to need satisfaction as an overarching construct being linked to motivation and engagement, individual psychological needs have also been linked with these outcomes in distinct ways. For example, a sense of autonomy vitalizes students such that they are more actively involved in learning activities—reflecting participation and persistence, two key components of engagement (Fredricks et al. 2004). Benita et al. (2014) found that students who felt they had a high level of choice (thus, autonomy) were more likely to set mastery goals and adopt a mastery orientation. Additionally, efficacy is positively associated with persistence (Vansteenkiste et al. 2010), a key variable of the motivation and engagement scale (MES; see, for review, Liem and Martin 2012). Finally, a sense of relatedness is considered a fundamental human motivation affecting cognition and emotion specifically and healthy psychological functioning more generally (Baumeister and Leary 1995). Thus, relatedness could be seen as fundamental to supporting students' motivation and engagement. Further still, if a student feels volition in his/her actions, feels efficacious about his/her ability to do well, and feels connected and related to teachers, he/she is probably more likely to internalize the learning and be more autonomously engaged (Niemic and Ryan 2009). Taken together, there are several established linkages between need satisfaction, motivation, and engagement.

There is also a positive link between psychological need satisfaction and achievement. That is, when students experience a sense of autonomy, efficacy, and relatedness, academic achievement follows (e.g., Deci and Ryan 2002; Hardre and Reeve 2003; Jang et al. 2012; Reeve et al. 2004a, b; Reeve and Lee 2014; Vansteenkiste et al. 2010). This relationship is often a result of need satisfaction promoting optimal functioning more generally, academic achievement being one aspect of it. For example, a sense of autonomy promotes not only intrinsic motivation, but also academic achievement by way of more efficient knowledge acquisition and greater flexibility in problem-solving (Deci et al. 1991). Additionally, students with a high sense of efficacy tend to have positive expectations for success which lends itself to not only high motivation but also high achievement (Nicholls et al. 1989). Finally, in a recent study, King (2015) found that relatedness facilitates optimal functioning both academically and non-academically in terms of students' engagement, academic achievement, and general well-being. Taken together, autonomy, efficacy, and relatedness can be seen as important antecedents to optimal student motivation, engagement, and achievement (Fig. 1).

Adaptability and the outcomes. Though the adaptability construct is a relatively new contribution to psycho-educational research, several studies have indicated direct and indirect connections with motivation, engagement, and achievement (Martin et al. 2013, 2014, 2015). With regard to the adaptive dimensions of motivation and engagement, Martin et al. (2013) showed that adaptability was positively associated with task management and persistence. This association may be explained by the fact that students who are able to regulate cognition, behavior, and emotion in new or novel situations are also likely to regulate their cognition or behavior in other situations—such as those requiring academic task management and persistence (Martin et al. 2013). Extending this, it is possible that there are similar relationships

between adaptability and other aspects of self-regulation, such as planning and monitoring actions. For example, it may be that if a student is able to regulate his/her cognition to figure out a novel homework problem, this student might also be able to regulate his/her cognition to plan out how to complete that homework by the due date—and monitor his/her progress as that task is done.

Research has also demonstrated inverse links between adaptability and maladaptive dimensions of motivation and engagement. For example, recent work demonstrated that adaptability was associated with lower levels of self-handicapping, disengagement (Martin et al. 2013), anxiety, and failure avoidance (Martin et al. 2015). It seems that if a student is able to adapt his/her cognitive, behavioral, and/or emotional repertoire in response to a novel or uncertain academic task (e.g., by minimizing negative emotions or thinking through different options), there is an enhanced chance of solving it. This leaves little motivation to engage in self-handicapping behavior or to disengage from the task. Hence, adaptability has been linked to reduced inclination and motivation to self-handicap or disengage.

With respect to academic achievement, research has shown that there is a significant direct relationship between adaptability and achievement, with this relationship being positive and of a medium effect size (Martin et al. 2013, 2014, 2015). In order to understand why adaptability and achievement are associated, it is again helpful to consider the conceptual nature of the constructs. If a student sees a question on an examination for which he/she has not studied, the student's ability to adapt his/her cognition (e.g., by thinking of related knowledge that may be relevant), behavior (e.g., by upwardly adjusting the amount of time on that question), and emotion (e.g., minimizing disappointment or fear) is likely to assist in better responding to that question. In this case, there is a credible link between a student's adaptability and his/her achievement (Fig. 1).

Academic buoyancy and the outcomes. Several studies have demonstrated a relationship between students' academic buoyancy and their motivation, engagement, and achievement (e.g., Martin 2014; Martin et al. 2010; Martin and Marsh 2006, 2008b; Putwain et al. 2012). Such research has shown that students who are academically buoyant are also higher in self-efficacy, valuing of school, mastery orientation, planning, task management, and persistence (e.g., Martin et al. 2013). Research has also shown that academic buoyancy is negatively associated with maladaptive dimensions of motivation and engagement. As Martin et al. (2010) suggest, motivation plays a key role in students' ability or capacity to be buoyant and overcome adversity and setback. It follows that if a student experiences anxiety, is failure avoidant, and is uncertain about his/her ability to do well, the capacity to overcome setback and failure may be limited or hindered. SEL research has found that programs promoting resilience (a cognate-correlate of academic buoyancy) and social skills aid in decreasing students' stress and anxiety (Bonniwell et al. 2016). Further, empirical evidence has shown that when students are not able to effectively navigate the typical setbacks and challenges that occur at school (evidenced by low buoyancy), they tend to be higher in anxiety, failure avoidance, uncertain control, self-handicapping, and disengagement (e.g., Martin 2013; Martin et al. 2010, 2013).

In addition to the link with motivation and engagement, researchers suggest that academic buoyancy is positively associated with academic achievement (Malmberg et al. 2013; Martin and Marsh 2008a; Putwain et al. 2012). Malmberg et al. (2013) showed that students who can successfully deal with academic risk and setback tend to experience higher achievement—and, interestingly, this is even more apparent when buoyancy is accompanied by a sense of control. Further, Collie et al. (2015) suggest that when a student is academically buoyant, he/she is more likely to perceive an internal locus of control over academic outcomes, an important foundation for future achievement (see Bandura 2001; Skinner 1996). It is thus evident that academic buoyancy plays an important role in influencing students' achievement as well as motivation and engagement (described above).

4 Implications for Practice

With regard to our central factors, SEL has much to contribute on the matter of psycho-educational intervention and practice. Notably, although these interventions can be independent of each other and need not be applied in sequence to be effective, there is also scope for these interventions to be combined or applied in a way that addresses factors occurring earlier in the process (e.g., autonomy support).

As Fig. 1 shows, autonomy support is suggested to be an important SEL-related construct predictive of students' psychological need satisfaction, adaptability, and academic buoyancy. Thus, SEL approaches for optimizing students' educational outcomes could target autonomy support as one potential avenue for attention and intervention. Autonomy support can be nurtured through teachers allowing students a sense of choice in their learning, listening and acknowledging student perspectives, and providing explanatory rationales for activities that show students their learning is paramount to the teacher (e.g., Deci and Ryan 1985, 2012; Reeve 2006, 2009).

Secondly, teachers can also directly assist students' psychological need satisfaction. For example, autonomy can be promoted by emphasizing a student's sense of control in his/her learning (given that a sense of control is a key component of autonomy). Researchers suggest that when students understand the connection between their effort and strategy and their outcomes such as achievement, they are likely to have a greater sense of control over their ability to achieve (Martin 2007). Suggested ways of supporting this connection are by providing task-based feedback and administering reinforcement directly contingent on students' effort and behavior (Martin 2007). In terms of efficacy, researchers suggest that it can be supported through individualizing tasks, responding to students' (negative) beliefs about themselves and their achievement, and enhancing goal-setting skills (Martin 2007). Finally, relatedness, and an increased sense of community and belonging more generally, can be promoted through cooperative learning environments (Martin and Dowson 2009). Relatedness is also enhanced on an individual level

through what has been referred to as “connective instruction” (Martin and Dowson 2009). This instruction emphasizes connections between the student and the material (the “substantive relationship”), the student and the teacher (the “interpersonal relationship”), and the student and the instruction (the “pedagogical relationship”; Martin and Dowson 2009). Taken together, teachers can employ a number of different strategies to better ensure students’ psychological needs are met and thus, positively impact their motivation, engagement, and achievement.

In addition to targeting basic psychological need satisfaction, teacher practices can be and are effective at enhancing students’ adaptability and academic buoyancy. It is suggested that adaptability can be promoted and sustained by attending to the cycle of self-regulation relevant to change, uncertainty, and novelty. In this cycle, students are taught how to: recognize uncertainty or novelty; effectively regulate cognition, behavior, and emotion in response to this uncertainty; recognize the value in that regulation; and further refine their regulation skills for future novel or uncertain situations as the need arises (Martin et al. 2013). Thus, through continual management and promotion of this cycle, teachers can impact students’ adaptability.

Finally, in terms of academic buoyancy, an SEL approach can be effective. For example, one SEL strategy is seen in the “Personal Well-Being Lessons” program (Boniwell et al. 2016) that addresses the challenges and social upheavals students often face in the transition from elementary/middle school to secondary school. This program involves 18 scripted lessons of 50 min each, addressing the scientific bases of happiness comprising positive emotions/experiences and positive relationships (Boniwell et al. 2016). Findings have suggested that this approach helps increase students’ ability to handle the challenges and adversities associated with the transition (Boniwell et al. 2016). By implication, adopting this SEL-based program has the potential to increase students’ academic buoyancy.

5 Conclusion

Drawing on key elements of theory, research, and practice related to SEL, SDT (Deci and Ryan 2012), and broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson 2001), the present chapter has considered the extent to which autonomy-supportive learning and instruction is associated with psychological need satisfaction, adaptability, and academic buoyancy among students and, in turn, greater motivation, engagement, and achievement (Fig. 1). In that sense, the chapter has focused on three SECs relevant to SEL, how these are influenced by the classroom’s social and emotional climate, and the influence that these SECs have on students’ educational outcomes. Future research would benefit from empirically testing the proposed relationships between SEL, SECs, and educational outcomes. Notwithstanding such future empirical testing, this chapter provides a conceptual mapping for the relationships among these variables.

As described above, research suggests that in autonomy-supportive environments, students are more likely to feel a sense of autonomy, efficacy, and relatedness and are also more likely to be adaptable and academically buoyant. By implication, autonomy support is proposed to be an important foundational experience for the development of students' SECs. Following from this, students whose basic psychological needs are met and who are adaptable and buoyant are also more likely to evince positive motivation, engagement, and achievement. To that end, SEL provides an informative foundation by which to consider factors and processes relevant to students' basic psychological need satisfaction, adaptability, and academic buoyancy. Through this, it is possible to better promote students' motivation, engagement, and achievement in school and beyond.

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Measures of Success: Exploring the Importance of Context in the Delivery of Well-Being and Social and Emotional Learning Programmes in Australian Primary and Secondary Schools

Helen Street

Abstract A significant majority of Australian schools now include school-based well-being and/or social emotional learning (SEL) programmes and initiatives within their school timetable. These programmes are delivered, often with significant investment of money and time, in an attempt to successfully nurture social, emotional and academic competency and promote positive mental health within the staff and student community. This chapter explores the impact of the school context on the effectiveness of these programmes. The key aspects of school context considered here are the school social environment, the overall school culture and the school climate. These features of school context encompass important aspects of schooling that have an impact on how SEL and well-being programmes are implemented. The chapter proposes that Australian schools need to more carefully consider how the messages being delivered by any well-being and SEL programme can be assimilated into the wider school context. They also need to give greater consideration as to how that wider context can successfully accommodate the aims of each and every well-being and SEL programme. Overall, the findings of the chapter strongly suggest that Australian schools need to implement SEL and well-being programmes with a far wider consideration of context than is currently evident.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Well-being · School context · Social context · Social environment · Physical environment

1 Introduction

This chapter aims to address the importance of *school context* in the delivery of well-being and social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes in Australian primary and secondary schools. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the

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increase in popularity of school-based well-being and SEL programmes over the past fifty years. It goes on to observe how this same time period has seen a widely reported increase in mental health issues in young people. The chapter proposes that these two seemingly incongruent increases may in part have occurred due to a lack of consideration of the importance of context in the development and delivery of well-being and SEL programmes in schools. It is suggested that many school-based well-being and SEL programmes in Australia are aimed at supporting *individual* well-being, albeit with consideration of individual social skills. It is further suggested that an individualized approach to well-being is limited when applied to groups of people (i.e. in classrooms and schools). The chapter suggests that, in any group situation, social identity is arguably a more powerful driver of social and emotional well-being than is individual identity. As such, the chapter concludes that far greater consideration needs to be given to the role of context in the design, development and delivery of well-being, and social and emotional competence (SEC) in Australian schools.

The ‘school context’ is taken here to refer to all aspects of the school’s identity and expression that impact on student life. School context may, or may not impact the uptake, delivery and effectiveness of school well-being and SEL programmes (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). The key aspects of school context considered here are the social environment of the school, the overall school culture and the school climate. Barnett and Casper define a ‘social environment’ in terms of the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact (Barnett and Casper 2001). Consequently, for the purposes of this paper, the ‘school social environment’ includes student–teacher relationships and the social and emotional competency of the teachers, their attitude, values and approach to teaching, along with their attitude and approach to their working relationships. For example, teachers may be stressed and overloaded or, in contrast, display high levels of SEC. They may be autocratic, democratic or authoritarian. They may believe in the concept of SEL or believe that their role is purely concerned with academic learning.

The social environment also subsumes many aspects of the physical environment given that they have to a large degree been configured by social processes. As such, the school social environment is also concerned with the built environment and the artefacts on show in the school that represent the school culture, values and overall school climate. For example, the school reception may acknowledge outstanding achievement with a display of trophies and awards or it may prefer to acknowledge the importance of cohesion and community with shared projects and photos.

The school culture and climate are evidenced in the social and physical environment and also in the policies, practices and social norms established in classrooms and in the wider school community. For example, practices about behaviour management, social norms about student–teacher communication and school policy on free time and homework could all potentially contribute to the well-being of the school students and to the effectiveness of any programme within the school that is designed to nurture well-being. Taken together, it is argued that these elements of

the school context encompass important aspects of schooling that have an impact on how well-being and SEL programmes are implemented.

1.1 The Explicit Teaching of Well-being and SEC in Australian Schools

Over the past fifty years, a burgeoning worldwide interest in youth well-being has been accompanied by increased interest in how the explicit teaching of well-being and SEC can effectively occur in schools (e.g. Eccelstone 2015; Street and Porter 2014). In 2016, we are acutely aware that we cannot make assumptions about the implicit well-being and SEC of young people. Schools in Australia, as in many other countries, arguably provide an ideal opportunity, and a moral and ethical duty, to actively nurture well-being in all children and adolescents within their care. It is no longer seen as viable or even sensible to focus mental health interventions purely on vulnerable members of the community, or high risk groups (Layard 2003). Paradoxically, the largest numbers of vulnerable young people come from the mentally healthy majority, rather than from minority high risk groups, simply because the healthy majority are by far, the greatest in number (Huppert et al. 2004). In line with Huppert et al.'s (2009) definition of well-being and Keyes' (2009) definition of positive mental health, positive mental health and/or well-being are defined here as a combination of a healthy level of hedonic well-being (including happiness and life satisfaction) and eudaemonic well-being (including engaging and progressing in life). The terms 'positive mental health' and 'well-being' are deemed as equivalent and therefore used interchangeably in this chapter.

A myriad of school-based well-being and SEL programmes have been developed in response to this call to better support mental health in young people (e.g. Askell-Williams and Cefai 2014; International Academy of Education 2005; Weare 2010). Elias et al. (1997) defined SEL as the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate other's perspectives, develop positive relationships, make responsible decisions and handle interpersonal situations constructively. SEL school-based programmes aim to foster the development of five interrelated aspects of SEC in an individual or group of individuals: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (CASEL 2003). Although an SEL programme may not explicitly aim to develop individual well-being, it is taken that SEC is required for positive youth development. As such, SEL programmes aim to indirectly support well-being through the direct development of SEC.

The term *positive psychology* was first coined by Maslow (1954) and represents the psychological study of well-being with consideration of SEC. Positive education is defined here as the interplay between positive psychology and education such that a school developing positive education is a school aiming to incorporate the principles and practice of positive psychology in all aspects of teaching and learning.

Current Australian programmes differ in their specific aims and objectives, but are commonly built on the theoretical underpinnings of social and emotional competency (SEC) and/or positive psychology (Huppert et al. 2004; Norrish 2015). They are frequently skills based and individually focused. As such, they aim to nurture well-being within group settings with a mix of SEL and positive education practices. Programmes aiming to develop SEC focus on teaching skills which nurture individual and social awareness, self-management, prosocial behaviours and responsible decision-making (CASEL 2003). In addition, programmes which aim to help young people to flourish in some capacity (to feel well and behave in a positive and community focused way) focus on one or more areas of positive education (e.g. resiliency, mindfulness, intrinsic motivation and character, Norrish 2015).

It is contentiously suggested here that the precise focus of specific Australian programmes varies according to the current popularity of underlying psychological constructs in the broader zeitgeist. Currently, many Australian schools are choosing programmes that aim to develop mindfulness (e.g. ETTY-Leal 2010), resiliency (e.g. Noble 2014) and growth mindsets (Dweck 2006). In addition, other popular programmes aim to prevent bullying (Rigby 2007), develop character strengths (e.g. Linley and Harrington 2006) and build community (e.g. Roffey 2014). Since the popularity of positive education and whole-school well-being came to the fore over the last ten years, whole-school well-being programmes tapping into a range of well-being ingredients have also become increasingly popular (Weare and Nind 2011).

Recent reviews of the impact of school-based well-being programmes have supported the importance of considering context in the planning, development and delivery of such programmes (e.g. Wells et al. 2003; Weare and Nind 2011). Weare and Nind's (2011) comprehensive investigation of 52 reviews and meta-analyses of school-based well-being programmes found that although there was little negative impact of programmes, positive impact was highly variable. Weare and Nind (2011) found that the most effective school programmes were universal, aimed at the entire school population and operated to support the whole child across all areas of education. Thus, the most effective programmes appear to be those that have the biggest impact on overall school culture and climate. There is clearly more to successful well-being promotion than carrying out a well-designed intervention.

1.2 The Ineffectiveness of Popular School-Based Well-being Initiatives

In their bestselling book, 'Nurture Shock', Bronson and Merryman (2009) describe one of the United States' most popular programmes to prevent substance abuse 'DARE'. DARE stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education and was originally developed by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in 1983 to teach students about the negative impacts of crime and drug addiction. The programme was embraced across America to such a wide extent that by the mid-1990s it was

reaching 25 million American Students and also being delivered internationally in several nations including Australia (Wysong and Wright 1995).

Yet, despite its popularity, DARE was repeatedly found to be completely ineffective at reducing harmful substance use and abuse. The majority of long-term research studies on the programme found little or no long-term reduction in adolescent smoking, drug abuse or alcohol abuse as a result of programme participation (e.g. Bronson and Merryman 2009). A meta-analysis by West and O'Neal examined the findings of 11 robust studies investigating the programmes impact and concluded that DARE was, at best, an ineffective programme (West and O'Neal 2004). What is perhaps even more surprising is the fact that these results came to the fore in the face of many US teachers, parents and community members enthusiastically supporting the programme for more than two decades. In fact, during the late 1990s, even in the face of disappointing early research findings, teachers and parents held onto DARE as 'the answer' to America's teenage drug problems (Wysong and Wright 1995).

The DARE evaluation findings stress the danger of mistaking good intentions for good ideas. The incredible popularity of DARE could be attributed to the fact that it made intuitive sense to teachers and parents and 'appeared' to be a great idea from the outset. These proposed factors, combined with a growing concern over youth substance abuse, resulted in a great deal of time and money being invested in something ineffective. It is suggested that misplaced faith in popularity ratings, as if they are a source of reliable data, has cost schools dearly. In fact, DARE executives often pointed to the programmes wide uptake as evidence of its credibility. As Glenn Levant, the former LAPD officer who directed DARE in the early 1990s, told the LA Times in 1993, 'Knocking DARE is like kicking your mother or saying that apple pie doesn't taste good' (Newton 1993). Beliefs about DARE became so embedded in the American education identity; they were not challenged or questioned in any objective way within the community.

A similar tale from the UK in 2007 relates to a social and emotional school well-being programme called SEAL. SEAL, the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme, evolved in response to the increased interest in SEL in young people during that time (Wigelsworth et al. 2012). The programme quickly became popular, and was ultimately implemented in 70% of UK state primary schools. The result of SEAL's popularity in UK primary schools led to a decision to roll out the programme into secondary schools on a nationwide scale. However, as with the DARE programme, the popularity of SEAL did not reflect its true impact. Wigelsworth et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive study into the effectiveness of SEAL in 22 UK secondary schools in response to a direct request from the UK Department of Education. They found little effect of the programme on young people's SEC. Popularity and face validity had once again been mistaken for credibility and impact.

The SEAL programme incorporated teaching across a range of well-being factors that mirror those embraced in SEL and positive education settings today, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. It is arguably understandable that inclusion of these key facets of well-being led many to

believe that SEAL is a worthwhile programme for adolescents. In fact, so compelling was both the face value and early trials of SEAL that it was brought to scale in UK secondary schools without any considered research of the programme in real-world settings.

The lack of impact of DARE and SEAL in secondary schools should not be taken as an indication that the promotion of social and emotional skills or health promotion is not important or worthwhile endeavours for schools. In fact, other meta-analyses have found a significant positive increase in well-being in students undertaking school-based SEL programmes (e.g. Durlak et al. 2011). Rather, it is suggested that lower than anticipated impact of many of these programmes provides support of the dangers of not paying enough attention to the context of programme delivery. There are many popular and intuitively credible school-based well-being programmes that have also later been proven to be ineffective, or worse, potentially damaging to well-being if delivered without attention to school context (Weare and Nind 2011).

In 2015, educational psychologist Professor Kathryn Ecclestone wrote an article for the UK Conversation in which she suggested that school well-being programmes are largely a waste of time and resources (Ecclestone 2015). In the article, she stated that her ‘forthcoming research has found that some of these interventions actually have negative effects. In general, the research field is fragmented, one-sided, inconclusive and methodologically flawed’.

1.3 Resistance to Change

The lack of strong support for many popular well-being and SEL programmes raises several issues pertinent to a whole class or whole-school approach to nurturing positive mental health in young people. First, it highlights the difficulty in creating positive behaviour change in individuals that is extrinsically directed. In general, individuals change their social and psychological behaviour far more readily when they are self-motivated to do so, not because of extrinsic motivational pressure (Ryan and Deci 2008). As stated by author and clinical psychologist Professor Burns (2016), who has helped over 2000 individuals to successfully change their health-related behaviours in a therapeutic setting, there is little point attempting to help someone to successfully change if their only motivation to do so is based on social obligation or to satisfy someone else’s desires.

It is reasonable to assume that, in Australia, the majority of people who enter into a therapeutic relationship to positively change their feelings or behaviour do so because they have made a personal decision to seek help and have consequently sought out psychotherapy independently or after first seeing a general practitioner. In fact, the recognition of distress is a precursor to seeking help and gaining a referral to an appropriate counsellor (Lancet 1981). Thus, the majority of people seeking counselling are self-directed to some degree. Moreover, premature dropout from psychotherapy (i.e. before a mutual agreement to terminate psychotherapy has

been made between client and therapist) occurs more readily when clients are lacking in self-motivation and also when they are younger (Jung et al. 2013).

Behaviour change is also far more likely to stem from self-motivation (intrinsic motivation or self-regulation) if it involves change that is considered to be in line with social and cultural norms (Street 2010). For example, a study of 947 primary school students over the course of one year found that classroom social norms about aggressive behaviour significantly predicted actual reports of aggressive behaviour over time (Mercer et al. 2009). Thus, a significant lack of individual self-motivation to participate in school-based programmes is potentially evidence of disparate social norms within the wider school community.

Ecclestone (2015) believes that the tendency of many current programmes to encourage a focus on identifying and managing feelings is leading to an overly sensitive generation who have been encouraged to believe that everyday discomfort signals a need for a treatment strategy. In particular, she has said that students who are unwilling to enter into group discussion about their feelings have been encouraged to believe that they may have an emotional issue that needs addressing. In reality, they may simply be quiet children or uninterested in introspection. Schools advocating a whole-school approach to well-being need to be careful not to single out children who do not respond well to programme strategies, as children with emotional issues that need addressing. As such, it is vital that supporters of popular programmes do not automatically equate programme ineffectiveness with individual difficulties rather than with issues arising from the context of programme delivery.

It may be argued that the majority of young people participating in whole class or whole-school well-being programmes today are primarily doing so because they have been told to. Whole class or whole-school programmes are generally incorporated into the curriculum with an expectation that all students will participate. The students have not necessarily chosen to self-seek behavioural or emotional change. These factors highlight a potential problem of imposed whole group well-being programmes, and the need to deliver programmes within a context that encourages self-motivated learning.

1.4 The Importance of Social Context and Social Norms

Lack of programme effectiveness across a broad spectrum of topics and methods of delivery has increasingly been attributed to failure to consider the complexities of human relationships in programme delivery (Weare and Nind 2011). Findings from research in the UK and Australian schools have repeatedly shown that academic, social and emotional learning are all positively linked to teacher SEC (Roffey 2012). If teachers display poor SEC, possibly due to severe stress and work overload, then it will be far harder for them to establish healthy relationships and to successfully teach any academic, social or emotional programme. Supporting teacher SEC as a means to supporting healthy student–teacher relationships needs to be a fundamental role of all schools Australia wide.

More recently, a study of 1741 Lithuanian students identified significant links between three aspects of school context and well-being, namely perceived teacher support, attachment to school and open classroom climate for discussion (Pilkauskaite-Valickiene and Gabrielaviciute 2015). These three factors all allude to the importance of socially and emotionally competent teachers who use democratic approaches to teaching and build positive relationships with students. The impact of the teacher on programme effectiveness was also established in a model exploring teacher SEL and classroom outcomes (Jennings and Greenberg 2009) and in a review of 30 studies of school-based programmes by Cuijpers (2002) among many others. Cuijpers' (2002) findings strongly supported the need to pay more attention to teacher competency. She reported that the most effective programmes involve substantial amounts of interaction between instructors and students—and between students. They teach students important social skills and give them opportunities to practice these skills with other students. Cuijpers' findings also highlight the importance of peers as positive role models in classrooms for those with challenging behaviours and social and emotional behavioural difficulties.

Cuijpers' (2002) findings offer further valuable suggestions for why so many 'good looking' programmes are less effective than anticipated and how future well-being programmes could become more effective in schools. Again the importance of considering social context in well-being programme delivery is highlighted. It is not enough to pass on factual information; students need an opportunity to discuss how well new ideas and strategies fit into their wider social world. Cuijpers also identified effective programmes as those which take into account the importance of social norms and the dominant school culture. For example, in drug abuse prevention programmes, success needs to include an emphasis on the idea that abstaining from drugs is 'normal' and therefore saying no does not equate to becoming a social outlier. This emphasis on establishing healthy social norms was noticeably absent from both the DARE programme and the early roll out of the SEAL programme.

Certainly, in addition to the lack of consideration of relational aspects of social context, the lack of significant impact of many programmes may well be a reflection of a lack of consideration of social norms within the wider school culture. This includes consideration of the school's policies, school wide practices and the physical artefacts on show in the classroom and school environment. For example, Kohn (1999) has frequently argued that any programme supporting intrinsic motivation will be thwarted by a school culture favouring extrinsic reward systems as a normative school wide practice. Similarly, it is hard to believe that a play-based programme designed to encourage creativity would not be overshadowed within a school culture that ultimately expects students to spend the vast majority of their 'free time' on homework or participating in organized adult-led activities. Simply put, school staff and students need to believe that the messages being delivered within a programme are representative of established social norms within the classroom and within the wider school community. Otherwise, the programme will not be seen as relevant, or reflective of real school life.

1.5 Taking a Whole-School Approach to Well-being

A strong body of research stemming from the 1990s to the present day supports the use of SEL programmes in schools to help prevent problem behaviours and promote positive youth development (e.g. Weissberg and O'Brien 2004). As previously stated, the most effective programmes appear to be those delivered across the whole-school community with a focus on both individual skill development and supporting a positive social and emotional experience for all community members (e.g. Weare and Nind 2011). It is proposed that the superior impact of school wide interventions is due to their greater impact on building desired social norms across the entire community. They move beyond an individual and curriculum focus and work with a multilayered approach within the school (e.g. Catalano et al. 2013; Greenberg et al. 2001).

In contrast, the lack of consideration of social norms and social context by less effective programmes indicates that the desire to nurture well-being in schools has been equated to a focus on individual skill acquisition in a group setting, as offered in the majority of SEL programmes (Hoffman 2009). Hoffman (2009) proposes that the importance of social context in supporting well-being has, at best, been minimalized, and more frequently completely neglected. It could be argued that it is far easier to 'teach' individuals to manage their emotions than it is to change the wider environment that accommodates them. Without a balance of attention on teacher SEC, continually challenging social norms and building a mentally healthy culture, as well as on teaching the skills for healthy participation in that culture, it is suggested that the success of any SEL programme will, at best, demonstrate inconsistent benefit.

Despite its apparent lack of consideration in the delivery of many programmes, the importance of the generalization of social skills across real-world settings is not new. For example, Stokes and Bayer (1977) suggested that unless social skills can be reinforced in a natural setting, they will not be utilized and taken on board by students. Similarly, Mathur and Rutherford (1996) have suggested that although the social skills training approach has been validated by research and shows it is indeed possible to teach appropriate social skills to students, the challenge lies in making sure the students can generalize these skills to other settings and situations. Thus, there remains a significant need to conduct interventions that can successfully promote the generalization of social skills taught in one setting to other 'real-world' settings and contexts.

1.6 Understanding Well-being Needs

Leading proponents of self-determination theory (SDT) believe that children need competence, autonomy and relatedness in order to be pro-active and engaged in life (Deci and Ryan 1985, 1987, 2000). As such, SDT conceptualizes positive mental health in terms of self-motivation (a mix of intrinsic motivation and self-regulation) and well-being. The theory is particularly interested in the impact of context in

meeting these three stated needs. Similarly, proponents of play-based learning and creativity suggest that optimum child well-being stems from a mix of play and the presence of a nurturing environment (e.g. McInnis et al. 2011; Whitebread 2012). McInnis et al.'s (2011) research suggests that for any activity to be viewed as positively playful, it needs to involve choice and control for the children. It is suggested that the need for choice and control significantly overlaps with SDT's focus on autonomy (Deci and Ryan 1985, 1987, 2000). These leading approaches to youth well-being are in agreement in their consideration of the need for children to have opportunity to be autonomous and self-directed within a healthy social environment in order to flourish. The desire to 'teach well-being' all too easily overshadows the need for children to have choice and control over the 'learning of well-being', both in and out of the classroom.

Current understandings of positive education also include reference to the importance of the school social environment. The constructs of positive education include an emphasis on the importance of positive relationships and the importance of having a 'sense of purpose' within the six listed components of well-being (relationships, a sense of purpose, accomplishment, engagement, positive emotions and health) (Norrish 2015).

In addition to the emphasis on the student's social world, positive education emphasizes the need for a sense of 'accomplishment' as one of its six listed components (Norrish 2015). It is suggested that the need for accomplishment overlaps significantly with the need for 'competency' stated as one of the three key needs for well-being in SDT (Deci and Ryan 1985, 1987, 2000). Competencies can be defined as strengths and skills in a particular area of functioning, whereas accomplishments are measurable outcomes generally believed to represent these strengths and skills.

Development theories embracing play and creativity along with both SDT and positive education theory, all amplify the benefit of schools supporting young people's well-being with a focus on meeting students' needs for autonomy (along with choice and control), competence (and accomplishment) and a nurturing environment (which includes relatedness and social belonging). Theoretical and research understandings about how best to meet the need for autonomy and the need to create a nurturing environment highlight the importance of both social and emotional skills and context. As such, the aims of any programme supporting autonomy and/or the creation of a nurturing environment need to be reflected in all aspects of the school culture. Moreover, the discussion presented here, emphasizes the need for both SEL and well-being programmes to support both autonomy and a nurturing environment either implicitly or explicitly.

1.7 Autonomy and the Creation of a Nurturing Environment

Positive education does not explicitly focus on autonomy as a specified key domain, however, positive education practice does make reference to engagement

which has long been explained in terms of underlying intrinsic motivation, choice and control, all key elements of autonomy (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). In contrast, SDT along with theories emphasizing the importance of creativity and play in healthy child development (e.g. Gupta 2009), emphasize autonomy as a central theme. It is suggested that both SEL and positive education programmes need to put greater emphasis on autonomy in all aspects of programme design and delivery, if they are to have maximum positive impact. This entails time and attention being given to both the foundations on which a programme is being built and to the precise nature of programme delivery. For example, children would arguably respond optimally to guidance in prosocial behaviour that encourages personal control and choice and does not include the use of controlling extrinsic reward systems.

In contrast, as discussed in this chapter, positive education makes overt reference to the importance of a nurturing environment (Norrish 2015). A nurturing environment is one in which children feel emotionally safe, develop intimacy with significant others and feel part of a close social community (Meyers and Meyers 2003). As such, the concept of a nurturing environment encompasses the quality of both individual's relationships and the wider social milieu. The importance of a nurturing environment to child well-being has been established in research over many years (Cole et al. 1987). Researchers have repeatedly found that children in healthy social relationships generally perform better academically, sportingly and have greater self-esteem and self-worth than those with relationship problems (Battistich and Hom 1997; Solomon et al. 1996). In contrast, Battistich and Hom (1997) found that children unable to form high quality relationships are more likely to have increased rates of depression, anxiety, drug abuse, eating disorders and many other psychiatric and social problems than are socially competent children.

In addition to a deficit of social support being linked to poor mental health, the presence of a nurturing environment has been significantly linked to the development of skills that promote well-being. For example, it is suggested that individual resilience can be taught as a skill to some degree but also stems naturally from the development of meaningful social connections (Baker et al. 2003). Individual skill acquisition, such as self-awareness and self-regulation, is important for supporting well-being but so too is context, in terms of its contribution to feelings of emotional intimacy, social cohesion and the creation of healthy social norms. Similarly, other research has found that supportive school environments, characterized by a positive climate, feelings of belonging and security and high levels of support and participation, can act as positive health-promoting settings (Eccles and Roeser 2011).

The importance of a nurturing environment also further supports the need to support teacher SEC. Teacher SEC is arguably pivotal in the development of a cohesive community as well as the delivery of SEL programmes focusing on individual skills (e.g. Collie et al. 2016). According to SDT, the positive impact of teacher support on school life has been attributed to its potential to promote competence and autonomy among the students and to meet the students' need for relatedness (Danielsen et al. 2009).

1.8 The 1970s Self-esteem Legacy

In addition to current alarming rates of teacher stress, it is proposed that the legacy of the 1970s self-esteem movement plays a pivotal role in creating school contexts that have countered the aims and objectives of many well-being programmes. The self-esteem movement stemmed from the publication of ‘The Psychology of Self-Esteem’ by Branden (1969). In this and subsequent publications, Branden proposed that self-esteem was the most important facet of any person in that it significantly contributed to positive social, emotional and academic outcomes. These mistaken claims led to worldwide interest in the promotion of self-esteem in students. Not only was the impact of self-esteem misunderstood, the strategies for supporting self-esteem in young people were also substantially misguided. Teachers and parents across the western world aimed to increase young people’s self-esteem by repeatedly telling them that they were wonderful. During this time, many American schools bought programmes that embraced ‘you can do anything posters’ and helped teachers to ensure that no one had to deal with a sense of failure at school (Weissbourd 1996).

This chapter suggests that the self-esteem movement’s adherence to the idea of blanket praise (Seligman 1995) was responsible for Australian schools embracing ‘well-done’ as a defined place to come in a race on school sports day, and the handing out of stickers to pre-pubescent children at every opportunity. Sadly, the lack of distinction between winners and losers in any domain of school functioning resulted in students becoming sceptical of all ‘supportive feedback’ and losing the ability to self-reflect and be self-critical of their learning performance (Kohn 1999; Street and Porter 2014). It is suggested that the self-esteem movement has been pivotal in the creation of a school environment that undermines the very needs of autonomy, competency and nurturing that it wanted to support. Although current well-being programmes are generally delivered on far more robust theoretical grounding than the self-esteem programmes of the 1970s and 1980s, they are often still embedded in the reward-based systems established during this era. As evidenced in this chapter, programmes that are delivered without consideration of the contradictions of the wider school culture are being delivered within a system that undermines their potential impact.

1.9 Conclusions and Future Directions

Successful well-being interventions result in a significant shift in the mean level of well-being of the entire population as opposed to an increase in well-being in a targeted minority subgroup (Park and Peterson 2003; Huppert al. 2004). But what makes them effective whole-school interventions rather than individualized interventions delivered to large numbers of people? The answer may in part, lie in the consideration of the social context of programme delivery and the influence of

social norms on behaviour change and overall well-being. This chapter proposes that Australian schools need to carefully consider how the messages being delivered by any well-being and SEL programme can be assimilated into the wider school context. They also need to consider how that wider context can successfully accommodate the aims of each and every well-being and SEL programme. It is suggested that schools need to implement school-based well-being programmes and initiatives with a far wider consideration of context than is currently evident.

In consideration of the reasons why well-designed programmes are not more effective, this chapter raises issues of context and consequently of the availability of school and government resources. Schools have limitations in terms of the time, financial cost and numbers of competent people required to deliver programmes effectively. As such, we need to ask if it is possible to deliver effective well-being programmes that are economically, socially and culturally viable in Australian schools. Moreover, we need to explore the popular notion that doing something (i.e. enlisting one or two small programmes or initiatives) is really better than doing nothing at all to explicitly develop well-being in the school environment.

This is not to say that we need to dismiss programmes that focus on a particular building block of well-being, or a particular well-being skill as a poor use of valuable resources. Rather, it is suggested that focused programmes (such as those building mindfulness, resiliency or positive relationships) need to be delivered with consideration of the wider school context at all levels, at all times. It is hoped that a wider consideration of context will encourage academics, clinicians and educators to move away from ideas about the effectiveness of the latest well-being programme. Instead, it is hoped that the future will bring an increased desire to ensure that schools nurture *positive learning environments* that support autonomy, competence and positive relationships for every student as a means to support improved well-being and intrinsic motivation in Australia's youth.

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Assessing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Review of the Literature on Assessment Tools and Related Issues

Erica Frydenberg, Rachel Liang and Denis Muller

Abstract There is widespread acceptance of the benefits of social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum in the educational context. However, the assessment of learning outcomes is not so clearly documented. This review compares SEL and the related constructs in three international settings, namely Australia, UK and USA, and then focuses on the assessment tools and practices used to examine SEL learning outcomes. To identify the assessment approaches used, multiple database searches were conducted. Boolean searches were conducted using the following terms: *student, learning, assessment, resilience, perseverance, self-management, social emotional learning, personal, social capability, psychology of learning and learning outcomes*. The database searches were limited to English-language scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals published from January 1990 onwards. Eight key studies were examined in depth, which collectively reported on over 120 tools/instruments. Lessons learnt from these studies are detailed in the chapter. From the review, it is clear that there is no magic bullet for assessing SEL across all age groups. The choice of measures differs depending on the purpose of the assessment. In building an approach to assessment, there are eight key considerations that may be distilled from the literature. A number of suggestions are offered for future definition and assessment of SEL.

Keywords Social and emotional learning • Assessment approaches • Learning outcomes • Measurement

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1 Introduction

The purpose in teaching social and emotional learning (SEL) is to assist young people attain the insight, equilibrium and judgment necessary to lead functional lives. More recently, the economic benefits of SEL have been recognised (Belfield et al. 2015; Miyamoto et al. 2015; OECD 2015). Furthermore, SEL outcomes have been linked with academic readiness, success and adjustment (Denham 2015). However, there is little agreement on how best to assess SEL in the educational context. Whilst there is agreement on the core competencies, there are diverse methods of instruction that make learning outcomes difficult to measure. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of how student learning is assessed, rather than on the nature of the social and emotional teaching to which the students have been exposed. The first step in creating this literature review was to conceptualise SEL assessment—defining its scope, theoretical basis and main elements (Fig. 1).

SEL ASSESSMENT: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Develop a SEL scope and sequence across the full age range pre-school to Year 12.
2. Agree on an assessment object – student, cohort, whole-of-school.
3. Adapt from the existing instruments those which best match the scope and sequence and the object of assessment.
4. Use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.
5. Apply the methods in ways that are suitable to the setting, taking into account cultural and ethical considerations.
6. Avoid the fallacy that it only counts if you can count it i.e. not every social emotional competence can be quantified to a metric.
7. Recognise and accept the limitations of existing instruments for universal systemic evaluation. Build a systemic evaluation by aggregating evaluations from units that are small enough to evaluate reliably and validly e.g. combining multiple measures such as problem solving skills, empathy etc.

Fig. 1 Key considerations in building an approach to assessing social emotional learning in the educational context

2 Definitions

Numerous interrelated terms have been used to identify what learning in the social emotional domain consists of (Halberstadt et al. 2001), and generally these terms have not been defined with consistency or clarity. For that reason, this review of the assessment of learning outcomes in the social emotional domain begins with a brief summary of how the term “social and emotional learning” is defined across the Australia, UK and USA communities.

McKown (2015), borrowing from Lipton and Nowicki (2009), states:

Social-emotional learning involves comprehension of social-emotional information, including encoding, interpreting, and reasoning . . . [It] also involves the execution of goal-directed behaviours in inter-personal contexts. (p.322).

He also states that whilst all the theories in the field recognise that comprehension and execution are intimately related, some children have the former skills but not the latter. In other words, assessment of acquisition and performance, whilst related, is not the same (Elliot et al. 2015).

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2013) defines SEL as:

[T]he process by which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills to recognise and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions [and] handle inter-personal situations effectively.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA 2012) documentation refers to SEL in these terms:

Students develop personal and social capability as they learn to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. This capability involves students in a range of practices including recognising and regulating emotions, developing empathy for and understanding of others, establishing positive and respectful relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams and handling challenging situations constructively.

There are several important common elements in these definitions. First, social and emotional learning consists of acquiring knowledge and developing skills. That implies the existence of two dimensions in SEL education: a cognitive dimension and a practical dimension. As McKown (2015) has noted, however, the acquisition of cognitive capacity (knowledge) does not necessarily mean that a person will exercise good practice (skills). It is in this gap between knowledge and skills that a third dimension, identified by CASEL, may prove decisive: attitude. However, Weare and Gray (2003) made the point that there is no definitive list of what constitutes emotional and social competence. They assembled a description of what it might consist of, noting that there were huge natural and social differences between people, and great variations in what was acceptable in different cultures, and they nonetheless offered this list (see Table 1).

Table 1 Descriptions of what constitutes emotional and social competence by Weare and Gray (2003)

Domain	Elements	Description
Emotional competence	Having self-esteem	Valuing and respecting yourself as an individual and having a sense of being a person entitled to consideration and respect
	Having an accurate and positive self-concept	Knowing your own strengths and weaknesses, having a clear view of your personality, preferences and needs, being optimistic, and having a coherent life story
	Autonomy	Being able to think critically and independently, resist pressure, and being able to make sense of yourself and your life
	Experiencing a full range of emotions	Being able to recognise emotions and understand their effect on you
	Expressing feelings	Being able to express your feelings by facial expression, gesture, body language, words and actions, whilst being able to take account of the effect on other people and on your own best interests
	Controlling emotions	Recognising what triggers different emotions in you; developing ways of responding in order to avoid harmful or unhelpful responses and promote calmness and clear thinking
	Increasing emotional intensity and frequency	Knowing how to increase the frequency and intensity of emotions and inner states that we and others find pleasurable
	Being resilient	Having the ability to cope with, and learn from, difficult experiences and then move on
	Using information about the emotions to plan and solve problems	Being able to look beyond the here and now to longer-term consequences and possibilities; being able to see and act upon solutions
Social competence	Empathy	Being able to see a situation from another person's point of view, and using this to be sensitive to how they might be feeling
	Communicating effectively	Being able to say honestly how we feel whilst having regard to the feelings of others
	Managing relationships	Being able to develop relationships that promote our own well-being without damaging others' well-being by establishing rapport, creating trust, negotiating a way through disagreements and managing difficulties

The CASEL researchers (2013) identified five core competencies to aim for in social and emotional education, which distilled many of the elements of social and emotional competence set out by Weare and Gray:

- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Self-management
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making.

ACARA adopted a similar list in the Australian Curriculum:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Social management.

The vast majority of the most relevant work in the social emotional domain is happening in the USA (CASEL) and the UK (social and emotional aspects of learning; SEAL). Australian initiatives such as MindMatters and KidsMatter are less well represented in the literature, but they nevertheless are widely used in Australia and have been subjected to various evaluations. Table 2 provides a comparative table of key SEL terms used in these jurisdictions. Generally speaking, then, SEL in the context of education refers to students' development and acquisition of skills to become more aware of their emotions and how to manage them so that they can make the most of their own lives by making responsible decisions, working towards their goals, and developing respectful and fulfilling relationships with peers and adults.

Table 2 contrasts the SEL areas identified by ACARA in Australia, CASEL in the USA and SEAL in the UK. It highlights the similarities and differences across the three communities both in labelling the skill areas and how the areas are described. For example, *self-awareness* is labelled and dealt with in much the same way by ACARA, CASEL and SEAL, whilst *self-management* is about both emotional management and stress management for ACARA and CASEL, but for SEAL it is more about emotional regulation. Whilst *social awareness* is the term used by ACARA and CASEL, SEAL uses the term *empathy*. However, the application is much the same, as are the terms *social management*, *social skills*, and *relationship skills*. Finally, CASEL focuses on *responsible decision-making* and SEAL addresses *motivation*.

Generally, SEL implementation requirements are articulated in curriculum documents, but implementation occurs in diverse ways, ranging from unscripted whole-school approaches to scripted targeted programmes for students in a particular age group.

Table 2 Social emotional learning—areas identified from ACARA versus CASEL versus SEAL

Australia ACARA Area ^a	Description Four interrelated elements of the personal and social capability learning continuum	USA CASEL Area ^b	Description Five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies	UK SEAL Area ^c	Description SEAL is designed to promote the development and application to learning of social and emotional skills that have been classified under the five domains proposed in Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence
Self-awareness	<p>This element involves students in identifying and describing the factors that influence their emotional responses. They develop a realistic sense of their personal abilities, qualities and strengths through knowing what they are feeling in the moment, and having a realistic assessment of their own abilities and a well-grounded sense of self-knowledge and self-confidence.</p> <p>Self-awareness involves students reflecting on and evaluating their learning, identifying personal characteristics that contribute to or limit their effectiveness, learning from successes or failures, and being able to interpret their own emotional states, needs and perspectives. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · recognise emotions · recognise personal qualities and achievements · understand themselves as learners · develop reflective practice 	Self-awareness	The ability to accurately recognise one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behaviour. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism	Self-awareness	<p>Knowing and valuing myself and understanding how I think and feel. When we can identify and describe our beliefs, values and feelings and feel good about ourselves, our strengths and our limitations, we can learn more effectively and engage in positive interactions with others</p>

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

<p>Australia ACARA Area^a</p>	<p>Description Four interrelated elements of the personal and social capability learning continuum</p>	<p>USA CASEL Area^b</p>	<p>Description Five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies</p>	<p>UK SEAL Area^c</p>	<p>Description SEAL is designed to promote the development and application to learning of social and emotional skills that have been classified under the five domains proposed in Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence</p>
<p>Self-management</p>	<p>This element involves students in effectively regulating, managing and monitoring their own emotional responses, and persisting in completing tasks and overcoming obstacles. Students are engaged in developing organisational skills and identifying the resources needed to achieve goals. This is achieved through developing the skills to work independently and to show initiative, learning to be conscientious, delaying gratification and persevering in the face of setbacks and frustrations. It also involves the metacognitive skill of learning when and how to use particular strategies. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · express emotions appropriately · develop self-discipline and set goals · work independently and show initiative · become confident, resilient and adaptable 	<p>Self-management</p>	<p>The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts and behaviours effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working towards achieving personal and academic goals</p>	<p>Self-regulation (managing feelings)</p>	<p>Managing how we express emotions, coping with and changing difficult and uncomfortable feelings, and increasing and enhancing positive and pleasant feelings. When we have strategies for expressing our feelings in a positive way and for helping us to cope with difficult feelings and feel more positive and comfortable, we can concentrate better, behave more appropriately, make better relationships, and work more cooperatively and productively with those around us</p>

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

<p>Australia ACARA Area^a</p>	<p>Description Four interrelated elements of the personal and social capability learning continuum</p>	<p>USA CASEL Area^b</p>	<p>Description Five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies</p>	<p>UK SEAL Area^c</p>	<p>Description SEAL is designed to promote the development and application to learning of social and emotional skills that have been classified under the five domains proposed in Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence</p>
<p>Social awareness</p>	<p>This element involves students recognising others' feelings and knowing how and when to assist others. Students learn to show respect for and understand others' perspectives, emotional states and needs. They learn to participate in positive, safe and respectful relationships, defining and accepting individual and group roles and responsibilities. Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society and build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · appreciate diverse perspectives · contribute to civil society · understand relationships 	<p>Social awareness</p>	<p>The ability to take the perspective of and empathise with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behaviour and to recognise family, school and community resources and supports</p>	<p>Empathy</p>	<p>Understanding others' thoughts and feelings and valuing and supporting others. When we can understand, respect, and value other people's beliefs, values and feelings, we can be more effective in making relationships, working with, and learning from, people from diverse backgrounds</p>

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

<p>Australia ACARA Area^a</p>	<p>Description Four interrelated elements of the personal and social capability learning continuum</p>	<p>USA CASEL Area^b</p>	<p>Description Five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies</p>	<p>UK SEAL Area^c</p>	<p>Description SEAL is designed to promote the development and application to learning of social and emotional skills that have been classified under the five domains proposed in Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence</p>
<p>Social management</p>	<p>This element involves students in interacting effectively and respectfully with a range of adults and peers. Students learn to negotiate and communicate effectively with others; work in teams, positively contribute to groups and collaboratively make decisions; resolve conflict and reach positive outcomes. Students develop the ability to initiate and manage successful personal relationships and participate in a range of social and communal activities. Social management involves building skills associated with leadership, such as mentoring and role modelling. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · communicate effectively · work collaboratively · make decisions · negotiate and resolve conflict · develop leadership skills 	<p>Relationship skills</p>	<p>The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed</p>	<p>Social skills</p>	<p>Building and maintaining relationships and solving problems, including interpersonal ones. When we have strategies for forming and maintaining relationships and for solving problems and conflicts with other people, we have the skills that can help us achieve all of these learning outcomes, for example by reducing negative feelings and distraction whilst in learning situations, and using our interactions with others as an important way of improving our learning experience</p>

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Australia ACARA Area ^a	Description Four interrelated elements of the personal and social capability learning continuum	USA CASEL Area ^b	Description Five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies	UK SEAL Area ^c	Description SEAL is designed to promote the development and application to learning of social and emotional skills that have been classified under the five domains proposed in Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence
		Responsible decision-making	The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others	Motivation	Working towards goals, and being more persistent, resilient and optimistic. When we can set ourselves goals, work out effective strategies for reaching those goals and respond effectively to setbacks and difficulties, we can approach learning situations in a positive way and maximise our ability to achieve our potential

^aAustralian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2012). General Capabilities. Retrieved from <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/personal-and-social-capability/organising-elements/organising-elements>

^bCollaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (2013). Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies. Retrieved from <http://www.case.l.org/social-and-emotional-learning/core-competencies>

^cUK Department of Education (n.d.). The National Strategies. Retrieved from <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218194057http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/inclusion/behaviourattendanceandseal/seal>

3 Approach to Data Gathering

To discover the approaches used to assess SEL in the literature, multiple database searches were conducted using PsychInfo and the EBSCO Discovery Service at the University of Melbourne which harvested metadata from both internal (library) and external (database vendors) sources. These included, for example, *PsycArticles*, *PsycCritiques*, *Social Sciences Citation Index*, *SocINDEX*, *ERIC*, and *JSTOR Arts and Sciences IV*. Boolean searches were conducted using the following terms: *student*, *learning*, *assessment*, *resilience*, *perseverance*, *self-management*, *social emotional learning*, *personal*, *social capability*, *psychology of learning* and *learning outcomes*. The database searches were limited to English-language scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals published from January 1990 onwards.

The initial broad search yielded 405,815 results. This was narrowed down by specifying studies related to the “assessment of student learning” rather than the assessment of student performance or competence in relation to these capabilities. This yielded 930 results. Initial screening of titles and subject fields/keywords allowed the selection of 100 most relevant studies to be considered in the review. Abstracts of each of the references were read to assess whether it matched the aim of this review (i.e. the assessment of student social and emotional learning and related issues). The result of this winnowing process was that the full texts of 40 articles were imported into EndNote X7 for detailed examination. In addition, 48 articles and book chapters were identified from web and manual searches on the basis of citations, geographic spread and a global consultation process undertaken by the authors.

This review then identified studies which provide useful summaries on the forms of measurement and assessment that have been used to date in the SEL domain, and their effectiveness in providing useful data. This process yielded 121 relevant measurement/assessment tools, from eight studies, together with key lessons learnt from the use of them. These studies all come from the USA, UK and Australia. In assessing effectiveness, this review is confined to stating what competencies were covered by the methodologies, and how credibly they did so from a technical point of view. The review says nothing about the effect on students' learning outcomes from the various programmes assessed.

Table 3 summarises these eight key studies. The instruments reviewed in those studies are listed in column 2, the scope of the assessments is described in column 3, and the observations of the authors of this review are given in column 4. Readers who want to know more details about the instruments can locate them by following the authors of the review in the reference list.

Table 3 summarises a vast number of measures used in the USA and the UK. Overall, there is little consensus on what is to be measured and how it is to be measured. There is also no clear distinction in assessment between comprehension and practice of the SEL competencies. What is clear from the measures reviewed to date is that the measures generally focus on one aspect of social and emotional competence such as affect or social skills. What is also clear is that there is more to

Table 3 International studies reviewing measurement tools that have been utilised in assessing social emotional learning

Country	Author	Assessment/measurement reviewed	SEL domains covered	Lessons learnt/remarks
USA	Denham et al. (2010)	<p>Challenging situations task (CST)</p> <p>Denham's affect knowledge test (AKT)</p> <p>The Devereux early childhood assessment (DECA)</p> <p>Minnesota preschool affect checklist (MPAC)</p> <p>Penn interactive preschool play scales</p> <p>Preschool self-regulation assessment (PSRA)</p> <p>Self-description questionnaire for preschoolers (SDQP)</p> <p>Social competence and behavior evaluation-30</p> <p>Southampton test of empathy for preschoolers (STEP)</p> <p>Battelle developmental inventory (BDI), second edition</p> <p>Behavior assessment system for children, second edition (BASC-2)</p> <p>Berkeley puppet interview (BPI)</p> <p>Coping with emotional situations</p> <p>Emotion regulation checklist</p> <p>The Pictorial scale of perceived competence and social acceptance for young children (PSPCSAYC)</p> <p>Positive and negative affect scale (PANAS)</p> <p>Positive and negative affect scale, child version (PANAS-C)</p> <p>Rothbart temperament scales—infant, early childhood, child</p> <p>Social skills rating system (SSRS)</p> <p>Social skills improvement system (SSIS)</p> <p>Sociometric ratings and nominations</p> <p>Assessment of children's emotion skills (ACES)</p> <p>Behavioral and emotional rating scale, second edition: (BERS), parent rating scale (PRS), youth rating scale (YRS)</p> <p>Bryant empathy scale for children</p> <p>Child/teacher/parent rating scale</p>	<p>Forty-three measures/tools reviewed to assess the SEL of preschool and elementary school students (5–10 year olds) on the 5 SEL core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making</p> <p>Academic-related SEL competencies. Six measures in total, which assess aspects of the contexts in which students learn and their learning behaviours, i.e. feelings about school/school climate, and academic competencies</p>	<p>Despite the wide variety of SEL assessment tools, there remain gaps for some constructs and some age ranges. For example, there are fewer “responsible decision-making” scales for the preschool-age range. Another factor is that because of children's expressive and cognitive abilities, most assessment tools are observational rather than self- or peer-rated. Many of the instruments focus on one particular aspect of social emotional competence</p>

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Country	Author	Assessment/measurement reviewed	SEL domains covered	Lessons learnt/remarks
USA	Denham, Ji, and Hamre, <i>contd.</i>	<p>Children's emotion management scales: anger and sadness</p> <p>Devereux student strengths assessment (DESSA)</p> <p>Emotion expression scale for children (EESC)</p> <p>Feelings about school (FAS)</p> <p>Friendship quality questionnaire</p> <p>How I feel scale</p> <p>Katz-Gottman regulation scale</p> <p>Kusché affect interview—revised</p> <p>Measure of prosocial and aggressive behavior</p> <p>Multidimensional self-concept scale (MSCS)</p> <p>Relationship questionnaire (Rel-Q)</p> <p>Resiliency inventory</p> <p>Preschool learning behaviors scale (PLBS)</p> <p>Child behavior checklist (CBCL) and teacher report form (TRF)</p> <p>The teacher rating scale of school adjustment (TRSSA)</p> <p>Learning behaviors scale (LBS)</p> <p>Revised children's manifest anxiety scale (RCMAS)</p> <p>Sense of classroom as a community scale—"Feelings about my classroom"</p>	<p>Diverse rating types were used for these measures—including teacher rating, parent rating, and student report, performance-based, observational, and "other"</p>	
USA	Haggerty et al. (2011)	<p>Behavioral and emotional rating scale; second edition (BERS-2)</p> <p>ASEBA: child behavior checklist (CBCL), Teacher report form (TRF), and youth self-report (YSR)</p> <p>Communities that care (CTC) survey</p> <p>The comprehensive school climate inventory (CSCI)</p> <p>Developmental assets profile (DAP)</p> <p>Devereux student strengths assessment (DESSA)</p> <p>School social behaviors scale, second edition (SSBS-2)</p> <p>Social skills improvement system rating scales (SSIS-Rating Scale)</p>	<p>The measures were chosen using the CASEL framework as a guide and focus on gauging the social and emotional skills of middle school students. It also covers constructs relating to school climate such as support for learning, school engagement and respect for diversity</p>	<p>The nine valid, reliable instruments cater for educators interested in SEL assessment of large populations of students over time. They are particularly relevant for SEL programme evaluation. The authors recommend that schools that intend to use the assessment should consult the test</p>

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Country	Author	Assessment/measurement reviewed	SEL domains covered	Lessons learnt/remarks
		Washington state healthy youth survey		developers to make sure they understand their school's SEL assessment results and so decide how the results can be related to other data from various sources and how those can be used to make informed decisions and practices in the SEL domains
UK	Humphrey et al. (2011)	Bar-on emotional quotient Inventory: youth version (EQ:YV/(S)) Child assertive behaviour scale (CABS-SR) Social competence and behavior evaluation scale (SCBE) Preschool and kindergarten Behaviour scales-2 (PKBS-2) Prosocial tendencies measure—revised (PTM-R) Child rating scale (CRS) Social Skills Improvement (SSIS/SSRS) Assessment of children's emotion skills (ACES) Emotion regulation checklist (ERC) Matson evaluation of social skills with youngsters (MESSY) Diagnostic analysis of nonverbal accuracy (DANVA) Differential emotions scale (DES-IV)	All measures reviewed seek to provide measurement of generic social and emotional skills in children and young people (to 18 years of age) be it multidimensional (social-emotional) or uni-dimensional (social). Most measures can be completed by children, parents/carers or teachers	The development of measures in this domain proves difficult, particularly with the variability in relation to the psychometric properties of tests. Many tests are short-lived. There are also questions about cultural transferability
USA	Kendziora et al. (2011)	Behavioral and emotional rating scale-second edition: (BERS) Devereux early childhood assessment (DECA) Devereux student strengths assessment (DESSA) Social-emotional assets and resilience scale (SEARS) Social	These five assessments addressed most of the five SEL core competencies and were appropriate for teachers' ratings	As a result of this study, five core guiding principles for SEL assessment were suggested: 1. Maximise benefits and avoid harm

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Country	Author	Assessment/measurement reviewed	SEL domains covered	Lessons learnt/remarks
		social skills improvement system (SSIS)	of the pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade student population	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Clarify and communicate goals of SEL assessment 3. Implement specialised SEL training 4. Understand the strengths and limitations of individual assessment tools 5. Use evidence-based assessments
UK	Stewart-Brown and Edmunds (2003)	Child behaviour rating scale (CBRS) Child development program (CDP student questionnaire) Connors' teacher rating scale revised short form (CTRS-28) Diagnostic interview for social and communication disorders (DISCO) Dominic-R: a pictorial interview Emotional instability, prosocial behaviour and aggression scales (EIPBAS) FOCAL Home and community social behaviour scales (HCSBS) Infant and toddler social and emotional assessment (ITSEA) Interpersonal competence scale (ICS-T) Penn interactive peer play scale (PIPPS) Penn state worry questionnaire for children (PSWQ-C) Preschool behaviour checklist (PBCL)	Instruments covered various domains of social and emotional competences for preschoolers and adolescents. They included a questionnaire, rating scale, observational measures and interviews which could be completed by children, teachers, parents and/or researchers	Three recommended measures were: The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) for preschool settings, The Behaviour and Emotion Rating Scale (BERS), and the youth version of the Bar-on Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i:YV) for primary, middle and secondary schools The authors noted that any form of social and/or emotional competence assessment would need to be introduced with caution and that cultural

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Country	Author	Assessment/measurement reviewed	SEL domains covered	Lessons learnt/remarks
		Separation and anxiety test (SAT) Social phobia and anxiety inventory for children (SPAL-C) School social behaviour scales (SSBS) Social ability Social skills rating scale (SSRS-T) Strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) Adaptive social behaviour inventory Boxall profile Cogs Coping in school scale (CISS) Devereux early childhood assessment programme (DECA) Early development instrument (EDI) Early years profile Emotional behaviour scale (EBS) Emotional and behavioural development scales (EBDS) Emotional quotient inventory—youth version (S) EQ-I:YV(S) Enable		sensitivities needed to be taken into account
UK	Stewart-Brown and Edmunds <i>contd.</i>	Fast Track; Leuven; Mary Layton Involvement scale for young children LIS-YC New close primary school project The optimistic child Process-oriented child monitoring system (POMS) Pupil attitude to self and school (PASS) Record of assessment for emotional literacy Reintegration readiness scale Self-esteem indicator Short-term education and pupil support (STEPS) The taking care project		(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Country	Author	Assessment/measurement reviewed	SEL domains covered	Lessons learnt/remarks
UK	Wigels-worth et al. (2010)	<p>Assessment of children's emotional skills (ACES)</p> <p>Child assertive behaviour scale (CABS)</p> <p>Child rating scale (CRS)</p> <p>Children's Self-report social skills scale (CS4)</p> <p>Diagnostic assessment of non-verbal (DANVA)</p> <p>Differential emotions scale (DES)</p> <p>Emotional awareness questionnaire (EAQ)</p> <p>Emotional literacy assessment and intervention (ELAI)</p> <p>Emotional quotient inventory: youth version (EQ:YV)</p> <p>Emotion regulation checklist (ERC)</p> <p>Matson evaluation of social skills in youngsters (MESSY)</p> <p>Measure of adolescent social performance (MASP)</p> <p>Pre-school and kindergarten behaviour scales (PKBS)</p> <p>Pro-social tendencies measure—revised (PTM-R)</p> <p>Six seconds emotional intelligence assessment: youth version (SEI:YV)</p> <p>Social competence and behaviour evaluation scale (SCBE)</p> <p>Social development scale (SDS)</p> <p>Social skills diagnostic screen (SSDS)</p> <p>Social skills improvement system (SSIS, SSRS)</p> <p>Teenage inventory of social skills (TISIS)</p> <p>trait emotional intelligence questionnaire—adolescent version (TEIQue)</p> <p>Trait meta mood scale for children (TMMS-C)</p> <p>Tromso social intelligence scale—adolescent version (TISIS)</p>	<p>Broad coverage of social emotional skills measures for use with students aged 3–19 (e.g. interpersonal social skills, social rules, adaptability, stress management, emotional regulation, social cooperation, social interaction, emotional literacy and social information processing)</p>	<p>Little consensus in SEL literature on what is measured and how it is measured. Provides an interesting discussion on scope and specificity of measures (typical and maximal behaviour), using child as central respondent as well as, parent, teacher, and school staff as respondents</p>

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Country	Author	Assessment/measurement reviewed	SEL domains covered	Lessons learnt/remarks
USA	McKown (in press)	<p>Social Skills improvement system rating scales (SSIS)</p> <p>Harter's perceived competence scale for children</p> <p>Berkeley puppet interview (BPI)</p> <p>Affect knowledge test (AKT)</p> <p>Children and adolescent recognition of emotion (CARE)</p> <p>NEPSY-II affect recognition test (AR)</p> <p>Diagnostic analysis of nonverbal accuracy (DANVA)</p> <p>NEPSY-II theory of mind (ToM)</p> <p>SIP-AP (a web-based assessment to measure social information processing)</p> <p>Test of problem solving (third edition, elementary form TOPs)</p> <p>Social language development test (SLDT)</p> <p>Comprehensive assessment of spoken language (CASL)</p> <p>Test of pragmatic language (TOPL—Second Edition)</p> <p>Preschool self-regulation assessment (PSRA)</p> <p>Domain-specific impulsivity (GRIT) scale for children (DSIS-C)</p> <p>Mayer-Salovey—Caruso emotional intelligence test (2004a, b): youth version (MSCEIT:YV)</p>	<p>Parent-, teacher- and self-report assessment; peer nominations; behavioural observations.</p> <p>CASEL domains covered (positive social relationships, perceived self-competence, self-concepts, emotion knowledge, social problem-solving styles, pragmatic judgment, etc.) in children and adolescents</p>	<p>The authors mention the distinction between comprehension versus execution of SEL. Each assessment tool or approach has its own pros and cons and each can yield a different perspective on student SEL. Direct assessment would suit measuring comprehension whilst ratings by others, and self-reports, would suit measuring execution.</p> <p>No direct assessment of self-awareness in the SEL domain is available.</p> <p>Little literature on the measurement for making responsible decisions and relationship skills.</p> <p>Existing assessment has been designed for individual use.</p> <p>Barriers exist for universal assessment.</p> <p>Generally only one dimension is assessed.</p>

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Country	Author	Assessment/measurement reviewed	SEL domains covered	Lessons learnt/remarks
UK	Windle et al. (2011)	<p>Youth resiliency: assessing developmental strengths (YR:ADS) The resiliency attitudes and skills profile California healthy kids survey—the resiliency scale of the student survey The child and youth resiliency measure (CYRM) Please note that only measures in English and relevant for children/adolescents are included here</p>	<p>All self-report measures that examine constructs relevant to resilience such as intrapersonal (e.g. resilience attitude) and interpersonal protective factors (e.g. family and community)</p>	<p>There are no “gold standards” on the choice of resilience measures and due consideration should be given to the purpose and context of assessment. For measuring changes, users need to ensure that the reliability is considered</p>

consider when deciding on an assessment tool than statistical reliability and validity. Psychometric properties alone are not that helpful when considering transferability of knowledge and cultural sensitivities; variations need to be taken into account. Consequently, many of the tools are observational, even though there is a lack of consensus on what is being measured by observational techniques.

4 Discussion

There is an almost infinite range of assessment tools that have been used to measure and report on SEL outcomes. Generally, they are related and focus on a particular aspect of SEL development. Many of them use an individualised approach and/or rely on reports by parents and/or teachers. In the eight key studies focused on here, more than 120 assessment tools have been identified with relatively few overlaps reported by different reviewers.

5 Development of SEL

The developmental perspective has been emphasised by Denham et al. (2009). They identify developmental tasks that should be assessed in each dimension of social/emotional development for each developmental period from infancy to late adolescence. They describe the tasks relating to social competence, attachment, emotional competence, self-perceived competence and temperament/personality. These areas, particularly the last in the list, highlight the expected individual differences in child and adolescent responses that are influenced by personality factors.

Watson and Emery (2010) point out that a range of methods are described that may be “pedagogically and morally valuable” (e.g. in situ observation, portfolios, video evidence, diaries and journals, participatory approaches, simulation and drama-based activities or interpretive narratives). To counter the lack of consensus on what is being measured, they argue that the assessment of such learning relies upon the ability to construct a shared understanding of the focus of observation.

6 Different SEL Outcome Variables

Durlak et al. (2011) also point out that different variables are used to measure student outcomes:

- social and emotional skills
- attitudes towards self and others
- positive social behaviours

- conduct problems
- emotional distress
- academic performance

All social and emotional skills have been assessed based on outcome measures to reflect skill acquisition or performance in test situations or structured tasks. Attitudes have been assessed by student self-report, and positive social behaviours have been assessed based on student/teacher/parent/independent rater's report. In their evaluation of 213 school-based universal SEL programmes, Durlak et al. emphasise the importance of taking into consideration the cultural background and developmental abilities of students when assessing learning outcomes.

7 SEL Measures

Amongst the many reviews of the instruments used, one of the most comprehensive is that of Stewart-Brown and Edmunds (2003) who, having reviewed 33 instruments, recommended:

- the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) for *preschool* settings (Le Buffe and Naglieri 1998);
- the Behaviour and Emotion Rating Scale (BERS) (Epstein and Sharma 1997); and
- the youth version of the Bar-on Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i:YV) for *primary and, middle and secondary* schools (Bar-On and Parker 2000).

This highlights the fact that there is not one instrument to cover the school-age range adequately, leading to the conclusion that for large-scale evaluations that take account of development and learning, the tools need to be tailored to the population. However, it must be pointed out that there is not likely to be universal agreement as to which of the tools available are necessarily the best. Additionally, these authors point out that some of the schools use report cards with criteria on reflective capacities, cooperation and inclusion/exclusion tendencies in addition to these assessment instruments. There is no comprehensive battery that can be applied across all school-age groups.

The consensus is that there are many approaches that can and have been used to assess social and emotional learning, including self-report, teacher or parent report, and response to problems. Generally, the tools have been designed for clinical use, large-scale data gathering or small-scale evaluations. For large-scale assessments, they each have the problem of response bias or social desirability. However, asking the question may in some cases be as important as the measurement of outcome, as the respondents see the desirable response whether they answer truthfully or not. The challenges relate to what can be ethically and developmentally considered to be

an appropriate scope and sequencing of learning in the SEL domain and consequently in the assessment of learning.

8 Learnings on SEL Assessment from Different Countries

USA

Cohen (2006) notes that there are not yet comprehensive individual measures that can be easily used across the preschool to Year 12 age range and argues for the need to determine social and emotional sequencing (i.e. ages and stages). He also issues a warning about how the effectiveness of social and emotional learning is evaluated, saying that when assessments about performance are only used to rate teachers or schools, they typically become a source of fear and resentment. He referred with approval to the US Department of Education's 2002 Partnerships in Character Education programme where grants were made to schools for SEL and where practitioners and evaluators worked as partners in an action research model to assess effectiveness of the programme.

UK

In Britain, the SEAL programme was introduced nationally in primary and secondary schools. It was described as "a comprehensive whole-school approach to promoting social and emotional skills that promote effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools" (Humphrey et al. 2010, p. 1). In their evaluation of SEAL's implementation and effectiveness in 22 schools and a matched group of 19 comparison schools, these researchers found what they called a very mixed picture. In short, schools differed widely in how they implemented it; there was a perception that SEAL offered nothing new; not enough resources were given to it; staff lacked "will and skill". Overall, the findings indicated that students' feelings of autonomy and influence increased, as did the climate of trust and positive feelings about teachers. The evaluators concluded that the programme had made no significant impact on pupils' social and emotional skills, their general mental health or their behaviour. This highlights the fact that when the evaluations are aggregated the findings may be generalised to the point where it is not helpful in terms of understanding benefits for individual children. The limitations of evaluation study design are often highlighted in the literature (Hale et al. 2011; Wigelsworth et al. 2010). For Wigelsworth et al. (2010), the issues around measurement include: underlying theory, inconsistent terminology, scope and distinctiveness of available measures and psychometric properties, to name a few. Similarly, in the USA the focus on the assessment of outcomes has been considered to be problematic. For example, Hoffman (2009) points out that often assessment is about identifying deficits so there can be a focus on remediation. Others like

Greenberg et al. (2003) recommend systematic monitoring to guide school improvement, otherwise evaluators get data that is confounded by complex relationships between age, gender, school and classroom factors, thus making it difficult to interpret (Hallam 2009).

Australia

In Australia, much as in the UK, an evaluation of the implementation of a SEL initiative in low SES Catholic schools in Melbourne (Frydenberg and Muller 2013) found that similar barriers and enablers to successful implementation existed. Whilst the initial commitment of resources and training had had a generally beneficial effect for schools, teachers and students, questions remained about the sustainability of the initiative because of its resource-intensive demands. As Elias et al. (2003) point out, the relevant characteristics of the adults involved in the implementation of social and emotional aspects of education have to be considered. These and other concerns noted by numerous authors need to be taken into account when designing curriculum that is required to be allied with assessment.

9 Consideration of Cognate SEL Constructs: Resilience and Coping

In addition to constructs directly embedded under formal SEL frameworks, there are cognate constructs that are also involved in development across the lifespan. Under focus in this chapter are two such constructs that are well represented in the literature. The first is resilience and the second is coping. When we search the term “resilience student learning assessment”, the search yields 34,635 results. Similarly when we search “coping student learning assessment”, the search generates 107,990 results. The two key terms, resilience and coping, are linked inasmuch as resilience generally refers to the ability to be able to “bounce back” from adversity or setbacks. Having good coping resources contributes to resilience. These are assets that can be acquired, particularly through the teaching of coping skills.

The key definitions of resilience in the literature relate to good outcomes when there is:

- “exposure to significant threat or severe adversity
- evidence of achievement of positive adaptation despite threats to the developmental process” (Toland and Carrigan 2011, p. 97)

Thus, much of the literature focuses on a response to adversity and whilst the literature includes resilience and coping as a competence asset, it does not fit well with the terms of this review, which focuses on assessing learning.

Similarly, stress and coping are arguably two of the most frequently researched areas in psychology (Frydenberg 2014). Coping is variously described as adaptation or as a response to stress (Lazarus 1991). Both of these terms, resilience and coping,

are heavily embedded in theoretical roots that take account of biology, capacity and situational determinants. Often the factors are described as “risk factors and protective factors”. The former impedes development, and the latter can be environmentally determined, such as supports within the home, school or community. Thus, there are potentially a multitude of factors that impact resilience and coping (Frydenberg 2008), in addition to learning.

However, there are two helpful exceptions. The first relates to the promotion of resilience through strength-based assessment (Nickerson and Fishman 2013) where the assessment itself contributes to resilience. The second is coping (ACS-2, Frydenberg and Lewis 2011) where the skills of social and emotional competence as prescribed by Weare and Gray (2003) on page 5 to 6 constitute a good coping skills programme (Frydenberg 2010). Additionally, the identification of the constructs provides the tools for teaching coping skills, measures a response to situations or can be used as a pre- and post-intervention measure such as coping with dyslexia (Firth et al. 2013).

Both these terms feature significantly in the education literature and could be considered as useful tools both in the teaching of SEL and in the measurement of outcomes. Thus, in future work, it is important to draw the links between coping and resilience and the constructs being defined in particular SEL frameworks.

10 Conclusions and Implications for Practice

At present, there is no one assessment tool suitable for use across the full range of ages from preschool to Year 12 as noted by Stewart-Brown and Edmunds (2003). There are doubts about the fitness of existing instruments for large-scale or universal SEL assessments. The most recent meta-analysis by McKown (2015) concludes:

- Existing assessments are designed for and best suited to individual assessment.
- Multiple barriers prevent existing direct SEL assessments from being well-suited to universal assessment.
- Existing direct SEL assessments are not suitable for mass administration.

Having identified the shortcomings of current assessment approaches, McKown and colleagues are in the process of developing “practical, usable, feasible, scientifically sound assessments that are suitable for mass administration” for children in kindergarten through grade three.

Many studies have concluded that qualitative assessments are indispensable. Boyanton (2009), for example, proposed the CES Classroom Learning Assessment Model using qualitative measures such as participant observation and interviews. The CES model, which stands for the three external indicators of learning: *cognitive continuity, emotional involvement, and social harmony*, views learning from a changing, individualised and multifactorial perspective.

Watson and Emery (2010), in reviewing the current assessment approaches for Social and Emotional Dispositions and Skills (SEDS), suggest that educators broaden their understanding of emotional intelligence. They also say that whilst there is a host of measurement tools available to measure the learning outcomes of different elements in SEL, there is a distinctive role for observational assessment of authentic performance in the domains of interests to gauge the process of learning. Their concept of social and emotional disposition skills (SEDS) constructs includes listening to others and asking questions whilst using appropriate body language and verbal communication. Motivation is shown through willingness to participate and make a positive contribution to activities after seeing the value in the activity. Independence is displayed through management of own feelings, knowing rights, risks and consequences so can act responsibly. Finally, respect for others is demonstrated through empathy and the valuing of relationships. These highlight how consistent it is with the models of SEL that we have contrasted in our Table 2. Their table provides a succinct summary of the areas to focus on in designing assessment. This together with the three external indicators of cognitive, psychological and behavioural aspects of learning, as suggested in Boyanton's learning assessment model, can be adapted and used to devise assessment tools, for example scenarios, in a form that is most suitable for a particular cohort of learners.

Ultimately, then, there is no magic bullet for assessing SEL. In building an approach to assessment, the following key considerations have been distilled from the literature (see Fig. 1). These include addressing the scope and sequencing of SEL throughout the school years and after agreement on the object of assessment adaption of existing instruments is suggested. Use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies is recommended with an understanding that a numeric is not the only thing that matters, and small units of information can be meaningful. As with most assessment cultural and ethical issues need to be taking into account.

In sum, although there is widespread acceptance of the benefits of SEL curriculum in the educational context, the assessment of learning outcomes is not so clearly documented. The present review of constructs in Australia, UK and USA has identified many assessment tools and significant diversity across contexts and developmental stages. Indeed, the literature in these contexts provides many lessons for assessment and evaluation. Moreover, the choice of measures will also differ depending on the purpose of the assessment. In turn, these play a significant role in future definition and effective assessment of SEL.

Acknowledgements This review was conducted by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, commissioned and supported by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

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School Belonging and the Role of Social and Emotional Competencies in Fostering an Adolescent's Sense of Connectedness to Their School

Kelly Allen, Dianne Vella-Brodrick and Lea Waters

Abstract The literature on school belonging is not well advanced in Australia and is complicated by a disparity in terminology (e.g., school belonging has been referred to as school connectedness, school bonding, affiliation with school, school community). Nevertheless, there is a common understanding that school belonging is vital and necessary for the social and emotional well-being of adolescence. This chapter will present a general overview of school belonging and associated empirical studies, present findings of a meta-analysis that has investigated the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging, and discuss practical implications for how to increase social and emotional competencies that may in turn enhance school belonging. The field of research concerned with school belonging and social and emotional competencies holds promise for future directions with respect to the applied impact in schools.

Keywords Belonging · School belonging · School connectedness · Social and emotional learning · Social and emotional competencies

For young people in secondary school, having a sense of school belonging and a range of social and emotional competencies are both essential components for academic outcomes, well-being, and a successful transition into young adulthood (Anderman 2002; Sari 2012; O'Conner et al. 2010). Yet research to date has indicated that levels of reported school belonging by secondary school students are generally low (Willms 2003). Researchers have advocated that it is important for

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schools to promote school belonging; however, there is an absence of frameworks, models, and interventions that may preclude schools from being able to do this successfully (Waters et al. 2009).

Social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions and competencies in students, that fosters social and emotional skills, may be one way to improve a sense of school belonging (Sirin and Rogers Sirin 2004). Social and emotional competencies have been found to be positively associated with a range of outcomes associated with positive development during adolescence including school belonging (Caraway et al. 2003), but also to be linked with other variables that have been positively associated with school belonging, such as a young person's perceived quality of their relationships (Zimmer-Gembeck et al. 2006), academic outcomes (Caraway et al. 2003), and general well-being (Nutbrown and Clough 2009).

Although the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging is limited several studies have identified that the variables have an important association with one other (e.g., Caraway et al. 2003; Sirin and Rogers Sirin 2004) indicating a highly plausible link that warrants further investigation. A review of the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging has not been conducted to the authors' knowledge. A greater understanding of the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging may assist schools to improve a sense of school belonging for their students. The impetus of this chapter therefore is to draw attention to these two important constructs and discuss how they relate to one another.

This chapter has three purposes. First, to provide a general overview of school belonging.¹ Second, to present the findings of a meta-analysis that investigated the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging in order to determine effect sizes and significant patterns. Third, to present practical implications for how to increase social and emotional competencies (e.g., self-esteem, prosocial goals pursuit, and positive affect) that may in turn enhance school belonging.

1 What Is School Belonging?

Baumeister and Leary (1995) suggest that the need to belong is a fundamental human motivator; thus, individuals are innately determined to seek out a sense of belonging and maintain it. A general sense of belonging fulfils an individual's

¹Various terms are used to describe school belonging in the literature (e.g., school bonding, engagement, attachment, community, and connectedness) these terms tend to share three similar operational aspects (1) school-based relationships and experiences, (2) student-teacher relationships, (3) and students' general feelings about school as a whole (Goodenow and Grady 1993). This chapter will use the term school belonging and will only apply findings from other studies using alternative terminology (e.g., school connectedness, school bonding) if it is consistent with Goodenow and Grady's definition of school belonging given how broadly accepted and applied this definition is within the literature (Anderman 2002; Knifsend and Graham 2012; Ma 2003; Nichols 2006).

innate psychological drive to belong to groups, take part in meaningful social interactions, and is so fundamental that it can be as “compelling as the need for food” (Baumeister and Leary 1995, p. 498).

Goodenow and Grady (1993) defined school belonging as “the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment” (p. 80). This is the most agreed-upon and widely used definition in past studies of school belonging (e.g., Anderman 2002; Knifsend and Graham 2012; Ma 2003; Nichols 2006). School belonging has been related to a student’s affective experience (Libbey 2007), and thus, other theorists have described a sense of belonging as a feeling (Adler 1939; Crandall 1981) or a need (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Maslow 1971), but such descriptions do not satisfy the multifaceted terms specific to belonging at school that are outlined in the literature (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] 2009) and that are found in Goodenow and Grady’s (1993) definition. A more recent definition of school belonging and extension to Goodenow and Grady’s 1993 description is by Allen et al. (2015) who define school belonging as one’s feeling of being connected to a school within a school social system. Their definition acknowledges that a student’s sense of affiliation to his or her school may be influenced by individual (e.g., social and emotional competencies, emotional stability, and academic motivation), relational (e.g., support from others), and organisational factors inside a school community (e.g., policy and practice), but acknowledges that the interpretation of belonging (as a feeling) occurs from the individual.

2 Why Is Fostering School Belonging Important?

The benefits of belonging across the lifespan have been well documented in the literature. This research suggests that an individual’s sense of belonging positively affects a number of key factors that contribute to overall health and well-being such as improved life satisfaction, self-efficacy, and reductions in stress (Haslam et al. 2009; Holt-Lunstad et al. 2010; Jetten et al. 2009). While adolescents may have a sense of belonging in many facets of their life, such as family and peers, a major domain in which they experience belonging is school (Quinn and Oldmeadow 2013). School belonging is a growing area of research that holds great promise for fostering student well-being and for having a clearer understanding of the role of social and emotional competencies at school.

Schools are an ideal environment for fostering a sense of belonging because they offer multiple opportunities for group experiences simply through their structure and placement within a broader societal and cultural context (Bronfenbrenner 1979a, b). Research investigating a sense of belonging in educational settings has highlighted three key benefits: (1) academic performance (Goodenow 1993a; Voelkl 1997; Sari 2012), (2) psychological well-being (Nutbrown and Clough 2009), and (3) prosocial behaviour (Lonczak et al. 2002).

Academic outcomes. Academic outcomes are an important target for all schools. Research has found that a sense of school belonging significantly predicts academic outcomes, such as academic motivation, effort, engagement, academic self-efficacy, and absenteeism (e.g., Booker 2007; Sanchez et al. 2005; Sari 2012). In a study of 364 elementary school students, Sari (2012) found that a student's grade point average correlated positively with school belonging. Sari suggested that students who feel they belong to school might also be more likely to exhibit qualities such as engagement, motivation, and involvement in extra-curricular activities. Sari suggested that further research was needed to understand why a sense of school belonging influenced academic outcomes in her study.

Such findings are supported by other research, which has shown that feelings of connectedness to school can lead to more positive attitudes towards learning and specifically, academic self-efficacy (Battistich et al. 1995; Roeser et al. 1996). In support of this, Gillen-O'Neel and Fuligni (2013) performed longitudinal within-person analyses with 572 young people aged between 13 and 19 years over a four-year period. The results suggested that school belonging was associated with a higher level of academic motivation when compared with peers. Moreover, the Wingspread Declaration on School Connections (2004) presented evidence that school belonging increases classroom engagement, which is considered to be an element of academic motivation (e.g., Connell and Wellborn 1991; Croninger and Lee 2001; Klem and Connel 2003).

Pittman and Richmond (2007) also explored the associations between a sense of school belonging and academic outcomes in adolescents. Results showed that a perceived sense of belonging was an important predictor of self-perceived academic competence. The literature also shows that as school belonging increases among youth, negative academic behaviours such as absenteeism lessen (Croninger and Lee 2001), school dropout rates improve, and truancy is reduced (Connell et al. 1995; Hallinan 2008).

Well-being. Well-being refers to positive psychological functioning and adaptation that incorporates variables such as life satisfaction, positive affect, confidence, and future orientation (Jose et al. 2012). A survey conducted by Wellbeing Australia (Roffey 2012) reported that 85.9% of the 466 student participants strongly agreed that student well-being enhanced their learning environment at school. Thus, well-being is considered an important aspect of school life and studies exploring school belonging have identified student well-being to be an outcome of school belonging (Anderman 2002). One such study by Jose et al. (2012) studied adolescents between the ages of 10 and 15 years and found that school connectedness significantly predicted well-being. The authors note that a reciprocal relationship was found suggesting that students who reported high levels of school belonging were also more likely to report high levels of well-being.

Other research has demonstrated a relationship between school belonging and well-being variables such as happiness (O'Rourke and Cooper 2010; Sharma and Malhotra 2010), psychological functioning, and adjustment (Law et al. 2013), as well as self-esteem, and self-identity (Nutbrown and Clough 2009). For example, Sharma and Malhotra's (2010) study of 500 adolescents in India found that school

belonging and social support (support that individuals receive from others [Whelan 1993]) were important contributors to the variance that predicted perceived happiness. Likewise, in an Australian sample of 312 primary school students, O'Rourke and Cooper (2010) investigated well-being and happiness markers. Their findings showed three indicators of children's happiness: friendship, belonging, and optimism.

Research has also found a positive association between school belonging and well-being for a range of minority groups including: refugees (Correa-Velez et al. 2010); gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender populations (Mayock et al. 2008); and African American students (Booker 2006). For young people with refugee backgrounds, establishing a sense of belonging has been found to be essential for well-being (Correa-Velez et al. 2010). In a sample of 19 refugee youth between 12 and 18 years of age drawn from an English language school in Melbourne, Australia, Correa-Velez et al. (2010) found that social exclusion had a significant impact on well-being during the first three years of settlement. The authors suggest that bridging relationships were important for fostering belonging and such opportunities for youths are often afforded through schools. Finally, Law et al.'s (2013) research was congruent with the above findings and concluded that the effects of school belonging on adolescent emotional functioning are so evident that schools would benefit greatly from implementing policies and practices concerned with promoting a student bond with school.

Prosocial behaviour. School connectedness is seen to decrease incidents of fighting, bullying, and vandalism (Wilson and Elliot 2003) resulting in a reduction in disruptive behaviour and emotional distress (Lonczak et al. 2002). School belonging has also been negatively associated with risk-taking behaviour related to substance and tobacco use (Goodenow 1993b) and early sexualisation (Samdal et al. 1998). Demanet and Van Houtte (2012) tested the relationship between school belonging and school misconduct with a large sample of 11,872 adolescent participants from 85 schools. The researchers measured deviant acts and misconduct, such as smoking, substance use, and being late for school. Their findings concluded that higher rates of school belonging were associated with lower rates of school misconduct. Thus, school belonging appears to be important for fostering a positive prosocial peer culture.

Summary. In summary, the benefits of school belonging for adolescents are apparent through the three student outcomes of academic achievement, well-being, and prosocial behaviour. It is therefore imperative that a greater understanding of the enablers and disablers of school belonging is established.

3 Towards a Greater Understanding of School Belonging

Despite the recognised benefits of school belonging (Lonczak et al. 2002; Nutbrown and Clough 2009; Sari 2012), many students report not feeling a sense of belonging to their school (Willms 2003). Findings from the Programme for

International Student Assessment (PISA), for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Willms 2003), showed that school belonging is low for many students across the globe. The PISA study investigated a large nationally representative sample of 224,058 15-year-old students' levels of engagement and sense of belonging across 42 countries and 8364 schools. Data collected from 28 OECD countries and 14 non-OECD countries showed a high prevalence of student disaffection with school, ranging from 17 to 40%. On average, one in four adolescents were categorised as having low feelings of belongingness and about one in five reported low levels of academic engagement. These findings suggest that there is a need for a greater understanding of interventions that specifically target school belonging.

School belonging is an important outcome for students within a school context. Given that school belonging has been shown to impact variables related to better outcomes at school (e.g., academic outcomes, psychological well-being, and prosocial behaviour) (Goodenow 1993b; Lonczak et al. 2002; Nutbrown and Clough 2009; Voelkl 1997), school leaders and practitioners working in schools should consider ways in which school belonging can be enhanced or maintained within their school setting.

4 A Case for Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional competencies are an important determinant of many relational outcomes for young people (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL] 2003). Although there are varied conceptualisations of social and emotional competencies (e.g., OECD 2015), a well-regarded and commonly used approach is by CASEL which conceptualises SEL into five key competencies: *self-awareness*, recognising emotions and thoughts, assessing personal strengths and limitations as well as possessing a sense of confidence and optimism; *self-management*, regulating emotions through abilities such as productive coping skills and working goal setting; *social awareness*, empathising with others and understanding social norms; *relationship skills*, establishing healthy relationships through social skills; and *responsible decision making*, making considered choices about behaviour (Weissberg et al. 2015).

Published articles that have investigated the relationship between school belonging and social and emotional competencies together are small (e.g., Samdal et al. 1998; Sirin and Rogers-Sirin 2004; Uwah et al. 2008). Studies concerned with social and emotional competencies in students and how these relate to school belonging commonly suggest that school belonging has been found to be positively associated with social and emotional competency constructs such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-concept (e.g., Kia-Keating and Ellis 2007; Samdal et al. 1998; Sirin and Rogers-Sirin 2004; Uwah et al. 2008). Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007) explored the relationship between self-efficacy and school belonging in 76 Somali refugee adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 years. All participants had been

exposed to adversities such as war or political unrest. The findings showed that those students with higher self-efficacy were more likely to report a greater sense of school belonging. In fact, one-quarter of the variance towards a sense of school belonging was explained by self-efficacy (Kia-Keating and Ellis 2007).

Other literature has focused on the social characteristics of SEL and has shown that they too are linked to school belonging (e.g., Connell and Wellborn 1991; Samdal et al. 1998; Sirin and Rogers-Sirin 2004). For example, Connell and Wellborn (1991) found that competencies such as social awareness, relationship skills, and conflict regulation skills were linked to a student's sense of belonging (i.e., sense of relatedness). They also suggest that when a student is engaged in school and experiences a sense of school belonging, the development of social and emotional capacities, skills, and better psychological functioning can occur (Connell and Wellborn 1991).

Zimmer-Gembeck et al. (2006) sought to evaluate whether or not *school fit*, that is, adolescents' needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence mediated, school belonging. A total of 324 secondary school students with a mean age of 15.3 years in South East Queensland were assessed using items that related to social and emotional competencies (e.g., "I feel like a competent person; I can voice my opinion") (Zimmer-Gembeck et al. 2006, p. 919). The findings of the study indicated that students' social and emotional competence was one mechanism that explains school belonging (i.e., how much autonomy, relatedness, and competence they felt). Specifically, feelings of competence among students increases school belonging suggesting that schools that promote autonomy, connection, and feelings of competence among students are better equipped to foster school belonging (or school engagement).

Data from various sources (Reschly et al. 2008; Ryzin et al. 2009) have demonstrated that positive emotions like optimism, hope, and hopefulness are positively associated with school belonging as well. Reschly et al. (2008) evaluated elements of Fredrickson's (1998, 2001) *Broaden and Build Theory* in a sample of 293 students in grades 7–10. They found that positive emotions were associated with increased school belonging. A secondary finding was that adolescents' positive emotions were also positively and significantly associated with coping skills, which in turn were positively associated with school belonging. This finding was also supported by Frydenberg et al. (2009) who found in a much larger pool of 536 Year 8 students that those who engaged in productive coping styles were more likely to exhibit a greater sense of belonging to their school. Therefore, social and emotional competencies such as positive affect and coping skills may therefore play an important role in fostering school belonging and vice versa given that the findings from these studies predominantly report correlation data.

These past studies suggest that social and emotional competencies play a role in a student's sense of school belonging. When a student has social and emotional skills such as self-esteem and self-efficacy and when they are socially skilled they may be better able to feel connected and affiliated to their school. This is important

because school belonging predicts many important outcomes for a student such as academic achievement, well-being, and prosocial behaviour outlined earlier (Anderman 2002).

The link between social and emotional competencies and school belonging discussed thus far has relied on individual studies. A stronger sense of the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging can be gained from meta-analysis,² which draws from a much wider empirical literature base than most single studies alone.

Driven by the impetus to improve the existing methodologies that have concerned themselves with understanding of how school belonging is fostered in secondary school settings (e.g., CDC 2009), the authors of this chapter, through meta-analysis, discovered that social and emotional competencies are positively and significantly related to school belonging. The following section of this chapter presents the findings that relate to the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging, and discusses implications of these findings for practitioners, and future directions for research and practice.

5 A Meta-Analysis: Social and Emotional Competencies and School Belonging

In order to systematically analyse the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging, a systematic search was conducted using predetermined inclusion criteria of the literature to uncover peer-reviewed studies that had studied both social and emotional competencies and school belonging. The search yielded 11 independent studies with a combined number of 7, 210 participants (median $N = 293$). The predetermined inclusion criteria maintained that the articles selected must present or test theories or theoretical constructs related to school belonging (or use related terms, such as “school connectedness” that define school belonging in the same way as described by Goodenow and Grady 1993); include samples reporting a mean age range between 12 and 18 years; present data derived from secondary school settings; be written in English and derived from English-speaking countries; be primary sources or original works; employ quantitative research methodology; use a measure of school belonging with more than one item; and be published within the last 20 years to capture relatively recent research in this area.

The independent variables examined in the research conformed with the core social and emotional competencies outlined by CASEL, that is, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision

²A meta-analysis provides a quantitative way to reduce the findings of multiple studies to a common metric, and then to relate this common value to independent variables of a study (Hattie and Hansford 1984).

Table 1 Study information and effect sizes for the theme of social and emotional competencies associated with school belonging

Study author (s)	<i>n</i>	Variable	Related core competencies	Effect size (<i>r</i>)
Caraway et al. (2003)	123	Social self-efficacy	Self-awareness	0.19
Frydenberg et al. (2009)	536	Productive Coping	Self-management	0.28
Heaven et al. (2002)	115	^a Conscientiousness	Self-management	0.50
Reschly et al. (2008)	293	Positive affect	Self-management	0.46
Ryan et al. (1994)	606	Self-esteem	Self-awareness	0.32
Ryzin et al. (2009)	283	Hope	Self-awareness	0.52
Simons-Morton et al. (1999)	4263	Adjustment to school	Self-management	0.49
Sirin and Rogers-Sirin (2004)	336	Self-esteem	Self-awareness	0.37
Stoddard et al. (2011)	164	Hopefulness	Self-awareness	0.48
Wentzel (1998)	167	Prosocial goal pursuit	Self-management	0.38
Zimmer-Gembeck et al. (2006)	324	Autonomy, relatedness, and competence	Relationship skills	0.72

Note Core competencies are defined by CASEL (Weissberg et al. 2015)

^aConscientiousness was measured with a 12-item scale which included items such as “efficient,” “organised.” (Heaven et al. 2002)

making (Weissberg et al. 2015). The constructs related to social and emotional competencies across the 11 studies are presented in Table 1. Here, the study authors, sample size, independent variable, related core social and emotional competency domain (Weissberg et al. 2015), and effect size are detailed.

Social and emotional competencies had a significant and positive relationship with school belonging. The *r* effect sizes in the collection of studies investigating the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging ranged from 0.19 to 0.72 with 100% of the correlations in the analysis being statistically significant.

The overall effect size for the association between social and emotional competencies and school belonging was considered to be of large strength ($r = 0.44$; Cohen 1977; Wolf 1986) and therefore relevant for schools. The *R*-squared value (0.44^2), the estimate of the percentage of variability in school belonging explained by social and emotional competencies, was reported to be 0.19. This suggests that 19% of the variability in school belonging was due to social and emotional competencies.

Using Rosenthal and Rubin’s (1982) calculation of success rate (i.e., how practically beneficial the change is), the independent variable of social and

emotional competencies could be said to increase the success of improving school belonging by up to 42%.

The results of the meta-analysis suggest that social and emotional competencies are significant predictors of a sense of belonging in secondary school students. This supports past findings that personal characteristics are positively associated with a student's sense of belonging (Reschly et al. 2008; Samdal et al. 1998; Sirin and Rogers-Sirin 2004). When schools engage in practices that encourage social and emotional competencies, this will likely increase the students' sense of school belonging and vice versa (Allen et al. 2015).

5.1 Factors to Consider and Implications for Practitioners

The relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging cannot be accurately explained from the current research beyond the fact that a positive and significant relationship exists. Further research is needed that evaluates intervention studies to confirm the potential for social emotional skills to increase school belonging. It may be that a student's self-awareness may facilitate them to connect with their teachers and that their emotional management helps them with the demands of school-based stressors. Other explanations may be that students, who are more socially and emotionally skilled and better at resolving conflict, are more likely to feel a stronger affiliation to their school due to better friendships. Such social skills may also assist their willingness and participation in joining more social groups, clubs, and activities. Only further research will provide more insight.

A second limitation of this research is that the direction of the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging could not be accurately determined. The current study used school belonging as the dependent variable in line with past researchers who have suggested that self-esteem and self-efficacy are needed first for the presence of school belonging (e.g., Finn's Frustration-Self Esteem Model, Finn 1989; Faircloth's Identity-Instruction Integration Model 2009). However, it could also be that social and emotional competencies are the dependent variables. For example, in the social development model, Hawkins and Weis (1985) suggest that once students cultivate a positive social bond with their school, they are more likely to have higher social and emotional competencies as evidenced by self-esteem or self-efficacy (McNeely 2003). As such, while social and emotional competencies may increase a sense of school belonging, school belonging may also lead to an increase in social and emotional competencies as well. What can be gleaned from the current meta-analysis is that when teachers invest in developing the social and emotional competencies of their students this will be linked to the students' sense of school belonging. Thus, schools seeking to build school belonging may do so by fostering social and emotional competencies. Further empirical evaluation of the association between social and emotional competencies and school belonging is needed to

determine the direction of the relationship, thus creating a clearly identified pathway for fostering this construct.

The results of this meta-analysis foster ideas for strategies to develop specific social and emotional competencies that will improve school belonging; however, these strategies cannot be confirmed without further research that evaluates interventions that specifically assess outcomes related to social and emotional competencies and school belonging. Based on the results of the current study, using only the independent variables with medium to large effect sizes (medium ≥ 0.30 , large ≥ 0.50 , Cohen 1988) from the meta-analysis, a set of practices that can be used by schools to boost social and emotional competencies of self-esteem, positive affect, autonomy, relatedness, and competence, and prosocial goal behaviour is described. The practices outlined below represent key variables worth exploring and effective approaches identified in previous research. They are not intended to be prescriptive and may be applied flexibly by schools who can take into consideration their own unique needs, culture, and climate to best make use of the evidence-based practices.

With respect to self-esteem, studies in the meta-analysis reported effect sizes ranging from 0.32 to 0.37 showing a medium³ strength relationship with school belonging (Ryan et al. 1994; Sirin and Rogers-Sirin 2004). Schools can be seen to enhance the self-esteem of students through psychoeducational programs and opportunities provided by the school through social and emotional curricula, small group interventions, or individual counselling. It is important for schools to be reminded that students have a role in fostering their own sense of school belonging and that sense of autonomy is critical. Students may be taught how to identify their individual character strengths (i.e., positive components of psychological character) and should have opportunities to apply them within curricular and co-curricular activities. Character education has been shown to increase self-efficacy and self-esteem (Proctor et al. 2011). Lastly, students can also be taught about the benefits associated with mindset (i.e., beliefs and attitudes) (Dweck 1986). Students who are able to deal with errors and perceive them as learning opportunities are more likely to demonstrate higher self-esteem especially in concern to their academic work.

Research in the meta-analysis that investigated prosocial goal pursuit and behaviour reported an effect size of 0.38–0.72, suggesting that this variable has a medium effect size with school belonging (Wentzel 1998). Students should therefore be encouraged by teachers and school leaders to set personal goals related to their well-being in addition to goals set around academic outcomes.

Interventions can occur within the school that foster positive relationships, coping skills, adaptability, resilience, and social competence. These practices relate to the finding that autonomy, relatedness, and competence reported a large effect size with school belonging ($r = 0.72$) (Zimmer-Gembeck et al. 2006).

³The medium and large effect sizes were used as determined by Cohen (1988), that is, r effects = small ≥ 0.10 , medium ≥ 0.30 , large ≥ 0.50 .

Studies related to positive affect found that this variable had a medium to large effect size with school belonging ($r = 0.46\text{--}0.52$; Heaven et al. 2002; Reschly et al. 2008; Ryzin et al. 2009; Stoddard et al. 2011). Positive psychology interventions that aim to increase positive feelings can occur at school for students to foster optimism, hopefulness, and happiness (Seligman 2011; Waters 2011). These interventions include gratitude curricula, giving to others, building positive relationships, resilience training, and savouring what went well routines (e.g., Nielsen 2011; Waters 2011), which can be delivered through teacher-training workshops or classroom interventions (e.g., activities dealing with core elements of positive psychology) (Shoshani and Steinmetz 2014).

5.2 *Future Directions for Research and Practice*

The research presented in this chapter was derived primarily from a range of measures of school belonging that have assessed young people between the ages of 12 and 18 years. Such studies only provide a snapshot of school belonging and the relationship with social and emotional competencies for this age group but do not answer questions relating to how the relationship between school belonging and social and emotional competencies may vary within this developmentally diverse broad age group. For example, what is the role of social and emotional competencies on school belonging during the primary school years? Does the impact of social and emotional competencies on the need to belong increase or diminish as students progress from middle school to senior school? Are there individual or contextual factors that moderate the relationship between social and emotional competencies and school belonging? Such questions could be addressed by longitudinal studies. More research is needed to empirically validate the associated evidence-based social and emotional competency school practices suggested in this chapter to further understand how they can enhance school belonging and how to increase and/or maintain these student qualities in secondary school settings.

Over the last decade, schools have become increasingly aware of the importance of school belonging with respect to student outcomes such as academic achievement, well-being, and prosocial behaviour. One important pathway to increasing a sense of school belonging is through social and emotional competencies; however, past research has relied on individual studies. The current chapter reported the results of a meta-analysis, finding a strong association between social and emotional competencies and school belonging. The results are promising and suggest the need for effective interventions for schools that increase the social and emotional competencies of students as well as create opportunities for fostering a sense of school belonging.

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Positive Education in Australia: Practice, Measurement, and Future Directions

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Abstract Positive education (PosEd) combines the concepts and scholarship of positive psychology (PP) with best practice guidelines from education to promote student flourishing within educational settings. In this chapter, we first review the conceptual approaches to well-being upon which much of PosEd in Australia is based. Second, based on our experiences with research, teaching, and consulting, we identify issues that might impact the successful implementation of PosEd, including the frameworks used, the extent to which implicit or explicit strategies are employed, the importance of sustained and rigorous evaluation, and the impact of student, teacher, and other stakeholder buy-in. Third, we illustrate our own research that addresses some of these challenges, including the development of measurement tools to profile well-being and the undertaking of longitudinal studies evaluating PosEd programs. We then consider areas of future inquiry and practice that are particularly relevant to the Australian context, including (1) the need for research

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and applications to expand to diverse populations, such as Indigenous Australians, migrants, refugees, at-risk students, and disadvantaged groups, (2) systems approaches to implementation and research, and (3) strategies to produce and evaluate lasting change. We conclude that there is much potential for PosEd in Australia, but care needs to be taken so that it becomes a core part of education as a whole, and not simply a short-lived fad.

Keywords Positive education · Positive psychology · Well-being · Skills · Development · Young people · Intervention · Program

1 Introduction

Formal education prepares young people for life by building cognitive abilities and knowledge in the core academic disciplines. Over the past several decades, standardised testing and global ranking systems have narrowed Australian curricula to focus increasingly on Mathematics, Science, and English, at the expense of holistic learning. While striving for excellence in these disciplines is an important and worthwhile objective, there is a growing national and international impetus towards expanding what education means, and thus an increasing emphasis on building both academic excellence and well-being (Green et al. 2011; Huitt 2011).

The shift towards well-being in education is likely to gain further momentum in the coming years. At the 2015 UNESCO World Education Forum, world leaders articulated their 2030 vision for education, with health and fulfilment central to this vision (Incheon Declaration 2015). The Australian national curriculum now includes personal and social capability as one of its core competencies (ACARA 2013). Thus, personal capabilities, such as self-regulatory abilities, social and emotional intelligence, decision-making skills, and resilience, are becoming central to the academic agenda. The increasing emphasis and funding for co-curricular services (Faulkner 2007), such as school psychologists, counsellors, and well-being coordinators, is yet another indication of the growing centrality of health promotion in education.

The initiatives for holistic education are timely, with the well-being of young people a cause for growing concern in Australia and abroad. Recent trends suggest that mental health problems accounted for almost 50% of disease burden in Australian young people (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011). About 1 in 7 Australian adolescents experienced a mental health disorder in the previous year (Lawrence et al. 2015), and suicide is the leading cause of death in Australian youth (aged 5–17) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). With studies indicating that the onset of 75% of psychological disorders occur before the age of 25 (Kessler et al. 2007), it is not surprising that the World Health Organisation (WHO) recently predicted that depression will be the leading cause of disease burden among wealthy nations by 2030 (WHO 2015). Inevitably, the national prevalence of disorder and distress in young people has led to many policy makers questioning what can be done to reverse such worrying trends.

Adolescence is a time of dynamic brain development, during which young people develop the mental and social capabilities required to advance through life (Patton et al. 2016; Steinberg and Morris 2001). This life stage is now recognised as an important window for prevention and early intervention to improve health outcomes. Instilling life skills and capabilities in young people during this critical phase of development might help them cope with challenges both in the present and as they progress through life. Positive Education (PosEd), defined as the application of the science of positive psychology (PP) to promote optimal functioning and well-being within educational settings (Norris et al. 2013; Seligman et al. 2009), has this endeavour as its central aim.

In this chapter, we first review some of the conceptual frameworks that underpin PosEd approaches in Australia, including how it intersects with social and emotional learning (SEL). Second, we identify issues that may impact successful implementation of PosEd programs and initiatives. Third, we review and propose an evidence-based approach for measuring and evaluating well-being within schools. Finally, we address potential challenges and limitations in the field and suggest recommendations for future research and practice.

2 Positive Education and Social Emotional Learning

PosEd aims to build strengths, capabilities, well-being and resilience in educational communities. It arose in part from recognition of the growing mental health crisis in young people. At its core, PosEd suggests that the purpose of education is to develop both traditional academic skills as well as happiness (Seligman et al. 2009). It is not a single approach, but rather provides an umbrella under which multiple theories, programs, frameworks, and approaches reside. The vision, scope, and boundaries of PosEd are yet to be fully defined, but it both intersects with and complements social and emotional learning (SEL; see Durlak et al. 2015; Greenberg et al. 2003). SEL programs focus on developing various cognitive, emotional, and behavioural capabilities, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, positive social skills, and responsible decision-making (Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning 2005). SEL programs teach students psychosocial skills across an array of content areas, including understanding and managing emotions, goal-setting, building lasting and positive relationships, showing empathy for others, ethical behaviour, and problem-solving. SEL has been shown to produce positive academic, social, and emotional outcomes in students (Durlak et al. 2011; Rimm-Kaufman et al. 2014; Schonfeld et al. 2015).

Many of these SEL skills are incorporated into PosEd programs. However, PosEd is broader in nature. It includes additional frameworks and theories, which go beyond psychosocial skills to include aspects such as character, morality, meaning and purpose, and physical health. It also is more interdisciplinary in perspective, drawing on literature from organisational scholarship, neuroscience,

economics, philosophy, and the humanities. Still, future theoretical and applied work will benefit from further delineating how the two areas fit together.

3 PosEd in Australia: A Taste of the Conceptual Underpinnings

PosEd is gaining momentum in Australia. Young people spend a lot of time at school, and many educators are committed to developing the character and well-being of their students. With psychosocial development becoming a core area for learning in the Australian curriculum, many schools are now building aspects of student well-being into their vision or mission statement (Allen et al. 2016).

Research and scholarship in PP has developed numerous interventions that can enhance individual well-being, buffer from stress, and develop one's character (see Parks and Schueller 2014 for a review). Some commonly used interventions include activities that help one reflect on good things in life, envisioning one's best self, showing gratitude towards others (e.g. writing a gratitude letter), and identifying and using one's strengths (e.g. Emmons and McCullough 2003; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Seligman et al. 2005). However, the question arises as to how the concepts of PP can best be implemented in education—a complex system with many resource demands, competing interests, and other real-world challenges.

Educators have a long history of developing and applying best learning practices to a range of topics to translate knowledge and skills to students. A growing range of programs is available. Most programs include at least some lessons or activities around character strengths, emotion regulation, mindfulness, gratitude, and positive social behaviours. However, the specific components and approaches vary by school and context. A full review is beyond the scope of this chapter, but in the following paragraphs we provide a taste of some of the common conceptual frameworks upon which many PosEd programs are based, starting with one of the most widely implemented and known programs available, the Geelong Grammar School (GGS) framework (see Chapter “[The Geelong Grammar Positive Psychology Experience](#)”).

In 2008, during a 6-month visit by Professor Martin Seligman and his colleagues, GGS began introducing PosEd into its community. The school designed initiatives around Seligman's (2011) PERMA (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment) model, adding a physical health component (Norrish 2015). Interventions, activities, training, and feedback at the school are oriented around this model. GGS implemented a whole-school approach to PosEd, in which both implicit and explicit learning is combined with school-wide practices across the school community to cultivate well-being and provide a nourishing environment (Norrish et al. 2013). PosEd is taught implicitly across subjects by finding opportunities to create links to relevant topics (e.g. strengths, gratitude), while staying true to core academic objectives. It is also taught explicitly

in scheduled classes across most year levels. The whole-school approach aims to engage all stakeholders of the school community, including teachers, staff, leadership, and parents. In recent years, GGS has extended training to educators and schools around Australia.

Another approach is school-wide positive behavioural intervention and supports (Sugai et al. 2000; Sugai and Horner 2002). This approach uses principles from behaviourism to support positive behaviours and enhance student, school, and community capacities (www.pbis.org). The program aims to build positive lifestyle results for all young people across personal, health, social, family, work, and recreational domains by making maladaptive behaviours less relevant and desired behaviours more attractive. Positive behavioural intervention and supports is not a curriculum, but offers a framework and assessment system for adopting and implementing evidence-based behavioural interventions within the school environment.

Many students experience considerable hardship in their early years. To address this, more tailored programs have been developed to help meet the specialised needs of this group. Trauma-informed PosEd (Brunzell et al. 2015, 2016) draws from the available evidence in traumatology, PosEd, and PP, to offer a tailored PosEd framework specifically designed to meet the unique developmental and educational needs of trauma-affected students. Specific components of the program aim to improve students' abilities to regulate attention, psychophysiological and emotional responses, repair disrupted attachment styles, as well as to increase their psychological resources.

In addition to these conceptual frameworks commonly underpinning PosEd programs, a growing number of standalone curricula exist. Table 1 summarises some of these programs, providing links or references for more information.

Finally, as schools learn about PosEd, teachers are incorporating concepts into the classroom without an overarching framework or established curricula. As PosEd is a young field, this allows experimentation, with various schools testing what works and what does not. Some schools will pick and choose concepts that work for them, and omit others that are not relevant within their setting. Organisations such as the Positive Education Schools Association (PESA; www.pesa.edu.au) allow educators to share their experiences and learn from others who share an interest in implementing PosEd programs.

4 Factors that May Impact the Implementation of PosEd

Over the past decade, members of our team have been researching, teaching, and consulting with various schools and organisations in the area of PosEd. Our work in this area suggests that there are several factors that schools might want to consider if PosEd is to be successfully implemented. Based on our shared experiences, Table 2 identifies several areas that schools might want to consider when applying PosEd, with some relevant questions for the implementation phase. Some of these issues

Table 1 Stand-alone PosEd curricula

Program	About	Further information
Learning Curve	A program for primary, middle and senior year students, which covers an academic year's program in either online or hard-copy formats. The program incorporates growth-mindset, mindfulness, and character strengths, and is based around six pillars: positive engagement, skills and achievement, relationships and optimism, meaning and purpose, exercise and health, and strengths and emotions	www.learningcurve.com.au
KIDsmART	KIDsmART's focus is arts integration, an inquiry-based approach that uses the arts to create connections between content and different ways children learn. The program aims to increase student academic achievement, deepen learning, and to build problem-solving skills. The program is primarily US based	www.kidsmart.org
Smiling Mind	Smiling Mind is a free education program which provides mindfulness sessions and audios for individuals or groups of students. The programs can be facilitated by teachers or other wellbeing staff	www.smilingmind.com.au
Youth Connect	Youth Connect is a program that works with the community to provide all young people with the skills and knowledge to manage a successful pathway through secondary education. A core focus of the program is to cultivate further learning and employment opportunities	www.youthconnect.com.au
Bounceback!	Bounceback is a series of interactive books, supported by online materials and	www.bounceback.com.au

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Program	About	Further information
	games, which covers a range of curriculum units: Values, Resilience, Courage, Emotions, Relationships Bullying, and Humour	
Making Hope Happen (MHH)	Based on hope theory (Lopez 2013; Snyder 2002) the MHH program aims to foster the core components of hope in students: goals, pathways thinking, and agency	Lopez et al. (2009)
Penn Resiliency Program (PRP)	A US-based program, the goal of PRP is to aid students' ability to cope with daily problems common during adolescence. Core features are building optimism, assertiveness, relaxation strategies, coping skills, and decision-making skills	Seligman et al. (2009)
Strath Haven Positive Psychology curriculum (SHPPC)	First developed and piloted at the Strath Haven High School in the US, SHPPC aims to build character strengths, relationships, meaning, and positive emotional experience	Seligman et al. (2009)
Celebrating Strengths	Celebrating Strengths draws on the VIA character strengths tool to build a strengths focus in students and teachers	www.viacharacter.org/resources/celebrating-strengths/
Self Science	A social emotional learning program, first started in 1978, provides a methodology for teaching social emotional learning skills that can be integrated into classrooms	www.6seconds.org
The Positive Living Skills Social and Emotional Wellbeing Primary Program (PLSSEWP)	An early education program, the PLSSEWP is focused on developing a child's self-esteem, building awareness and skills to understand and regulate emotions and behaviours, and fostering children's ability to form healthy and secure relationships while interacting with others	www.kidsmatter.edu.au

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Program	About	Further information
MindUp Curriculum	Developed by the Hawn Foundation, MindUp offers a curriculum to develop social, emotional, and self-regulatory strategies for early to middle level students	www.mindup.org
YouCanDoIt!	YouCanDoIt! is a social emotional learning program designed to build five core capabilities: confidence, persistence, organisation, resilience, and interpersonal relations	http://www.asg.com.au/you-can-do-it-education

we address in greater detail below, but others are open questions that schools and the field as a whole will need to consider in the future.

An important factor to consider is what PosEd will look like in the school. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach, as different schools are finding success by following different approaches. Some of the schools that we have worked with have been strategic and structured in their approach, whereas others simply have some teachers or people in the school trialling different exercises in their classes. Some of the schools that are currently implementing PosEd include weekly explicit lessons devoted to PosEd content across one or more year levels, as well as implicitly embedding positive language and well-being concepts through all areas of the school. Other schools, especially those that are early in their PosEd journey, have included small programs and activities, mostly driven by a few interested staff members. Several schools are in the process of developing a strategic approach, up-skilling staff, with hopes of implementing formal and informal programs over the next few years.

Some schools are following a specific conceptual model, whereas others incorporate a range of activities or programs. For example, GGS follows a modified PERMA model, adding in a physical health component (Norrish 2015). St Peter's College in Adelaide has also followed the PERMA model (Kern et al. 2014, Kern et al. 2015a). After reviewing a range of models, one school developed their own model ("learn, grow, flourish!"), which was the best fit for the school.

Another issue to consider is who should be involved. Schools that have the most success are taking a whole-school approach, with teachers, staff, leadership, and other key stakeholders all involved (Waters and White 2015). However, what is meant by whole of school is not clear and might vary depending on the context of the school. Often, schools focus on the students, with the hope and aim of building student well-being. However, this can meet resistance in the school, especially as

Table 2 Some issues and questions to consider in the implementation of a PosEd program

Issue	Questions to ask
Boundaries of the program	Who should be targeted and included in a program? Should it focus on students or staff alone, or incorporate students, staff, leadership, parents, and the local community?
Explicit versus implicit strategies	To what extent should PosEd be explicitly taught in classes versus implicitly embedded into the climate and structure of the school?
Framework	Should there be a specific framework structuring PosEd efforts? If so, what framework is most appropriate for the values and context of the school? Should it be an existing framework or model, or should it be a hybrid of different models?
Language and culture	What language should be used? What is the meaning of different words, and do they resonate with the school, or should language be modified to fit the culture?
Intended outcomes	What outcomes are expected to come from the program? Who will benefit? Are expectations realistic? Will benefits of the program be visible immediately, or will it take several years or even decades to see the full impact of the program?
Evaluation	How will efforts be evaluated? What measures are collected? Should these be self-reported surveys or incorporate other strategies? What are the pressures to demonstrate immediate success?
Timeframe for implementation	What is the timeframe of change? What can be implemented immediately, and what will take a longer period of time? How should program efforts be structured?
Potential barriers	What barriers will be encountered? How can potential barriers be addressed?
Resources	What resources are available? How can resources be used most effectively? What sort of support and funding is available for short-term efforts and long-term strategies?
Training and consultation	How much training for staff members is needed? Are professional development days sufficient, or should some staff members receive formal training in PosEd? Should outside consultants be used?
Sustainability	How can PosEd be embedded in the school, so that it survives through shifts in leadership and staff turnover? Which strategies are more sustainable?

teachers feel overworked and disconnected from a new PosEd initiative. One approach might be to focus first on staff, work to build morale through teacher centred initiatives and training (e.g. Jennings et al. 2013; Roesner et al. 2013), identify and engage early adopters and champions, and gain commitment from leadership, and only then turn to the students themselves.

Over the past few years, there has been a growing interest in including measurement and evaluation as part of the implementation process. This is becoming increasingly important, both to help schools evaluate what is working or not working and to provide evidence that putting resources into PosEd will be useful. Schools that are more advanced in their PosEd journey tend to be using a range of methods to evaluate their efforts, including student attitude and well-being surveys,

feedback sessions with staff, observation, and behavioural data (e.g. attendance, positive behaviours). Positive behavioural intervention and supports includes explicit methods of evaluation. However, for most teachers that we consult with, success is based on observations and anecdotal evidence. There does not seem to be a strong consensus around best approaches for evaluating PosEd efforts, married with a strong sense that resources for evaluating efforts are needed.

Educators are showing a growing interest in incorporating PosEd within their schools, as evidenced by the exponential growth in the number of people seeking and completing training in PosEd. However, our students, collaborators, and colleagues have encountered numerous challenges, which if poorly managed, can extinguish the growing interest in the field. While many staff are receptive to PosEd, others are unsupportive, cynical of “happiology”, and even block efforts (see also White 2016). There is often a lack of support during the early stages of implementation. If leadership is unsupportive, then it is generally very difficult to get the programs underway. Some students are resistant to the activities conducted within PosEd programs, such as mindfulness and other exercises. Perhaps the biggest issues stem from conflicting priorities and time and resource issues. Teachers are time-poor, and if they feel like it is just another thing to do, then they are unlikely to engage. The growing number of resources available is generally helpful, but often teachers are unaware of what is available or programs are too costly. Motivated staff then find ways to implement PP concepts into classes, but this takes time, energy, and resources.

As a whole, implementing PosEd takes time. Early on, there is often resistance, and there can be numerous setbacks along the way. Change is challenging, and it is important to take small steps, take things slowly, and do small things well. We recommend taking time to remedy situations where people are unsupportive and when various initiatives are not working, but schools should not allow these negatives factors to become the full focus.

5 Measuring Well-Being in Schools: An Introduction to the Well-Being Profiler

One of the challenges of understanding the broader impact of PosEd on student engagement, achievement, well-being and successful transition into young adulthood is to accurately and efficiently measure adolescent well-being. Many approaches to measuring well-being exist, but there is little clarity for schools about the methods available to approach it. While schools that are more advanced in their PosEd journey generally have ways to measure well-being, little consensus exists about the best approaches.

Traditionally, there have been two philosophical approaches that underpin the measurement and study of well-being: eudaimonia and hedonia (Deci and Ryan 2008; Ryan and Deci 2001). Whereas eudaimonic approaches are more concerned

with engaging with life’s existential challenges and the optimisation of human potential (e.g. pursuing meaning, purpose, identity, growth), hedonic approaches are concerned with the subjective experience of happiness. Increasingly, researchers are in agreement that a broad, synergistic approach, incorporating both of these two philosophical traditions, provides a more comprehensive method for measuring and studying well-being than focusing on either domain alone (Delle Fave et al. 2011; Forgeard et al. 2011; Henderson and Knight 2012; Keyes 2007; Vella-Brodrick, in press).

There are several existing frameworks for studying and measuring well-being. A set of those that might be of particular of interest to schools and community youth groups are outlined in Table 3.

The list of frameworks contains common key variables and conceptual overlap. Many of the measured variables are embedded within broader life domains of young people, including strengths and emotional well-being; interpersonal relationships with family, friends, teachers and members of the wider community, as well as cognitive and psychological well-being. Just as these frameworks have overlapping concepts, there are also unique variables within each of the measurement approaches.

Table 3 Existing frameworks for measuring youth wellbeing

Measurement framework	About	Reference
Positive youth development	A strengths-based framework comprising of five core positive assets in young people: caring, character, competence, confidence, and connection	Lerner et al. (2009)
PERMA	The PERMA model of flourishing is defined by five pillars: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment	Seligman (2011)
Flourishing	Flourishing is measured by 10 aspects of feeling good (Hedonia) and functioning effectively (Eudaimonia): including competence, emotional stability, engagement, meaning, optimism, positive emotion, positive relationships, resilience, self-esteem, and vitality	Huppert and So (2013)
Psycho-social systems	A psycho-social system approach is captured by the five domains of positive functioning: attention and awareness, comprehension and coping, emotions, goals and habits, and virtues and relationships	Rusk and Waters (2015)
PROSPER	The PROSPER framework incorporates seven components: positivity, relationships, outcomes, strengths, purpose, engagement, and resilience	Noble and McGrath (2015)
EPOCH	The EPOCH model of adolescent well-being measures five positive psychological characteristics: engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, and happiness	Kern et al. (2016)

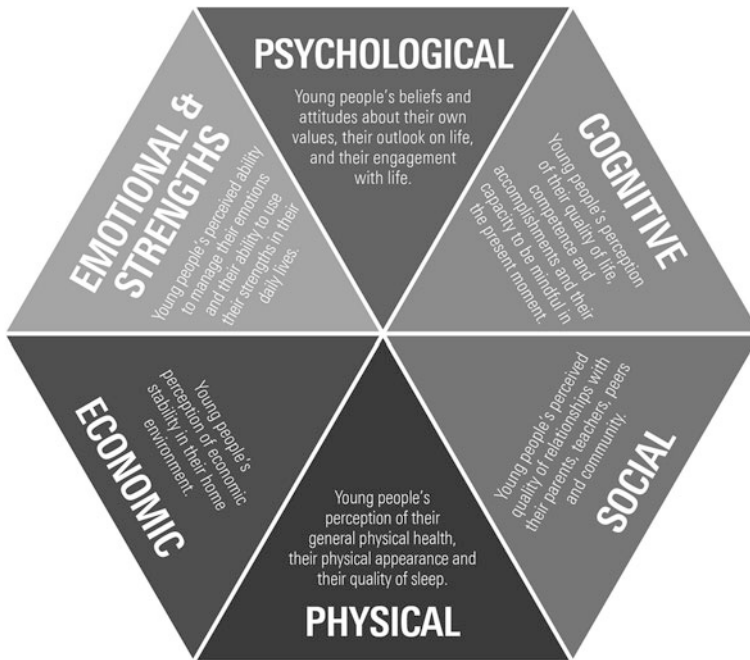


Fig. 1 An integrated model of measuring youth wellbeing (Chin et al., in prep)

To draw together these converging but independent approaches to measuring adolescent well-being, Chin et al. (2016a, c) conducted a systematic review of the relevant literature to identify core themes relating to adolescent well-being. The review incorporated relevant theoretical perspectives, meta-analyses, and a range of empirical studies. The core themes identified from the review process served as the underpinning for a comprehensive, online survey and reporting tool: The Well-being Profiler (Chin et al. 2015, 2016b). This multi-dimensional measurement tool captures six broad domains of well-being, which are depicted in Fig. 1.

The Well-being Profiler provides domain scores to distribute information on how young people are faring with respect to six categories of well-being. Apart from positive indicators of well-being, such as engagement, life satisfaction, happiness, connectedness, physical health and stability at home, risk factors are also included. For example, negative emotional states such as anger, anxiety, depression and stress provide information about subjective experiences that might oppose the domain of emotional well-being and strengths. Other risk factors include loneliness, bullying, and negative peer pressure, which yield information about negative forms of sociality that could obstruct the domain of social well-being. Levels of sedentary activity are relevant to physical well-being. The Well-being Profiler can help schools and community groups identify indicators and risk factors of well-being, which can enable more targeted and effective interventions (Chin, in press). This level of information can also be used as a needs analysis, prior to the implementation of new

programs, as activities and discussions can be suitably tailored towards addressing the evident concerns and challenges found within a particular cohort of young people.

As an example of the Well-being Profiler in action, a recent needs analysis was conducted with a community of schools in the North-Eastern region of Victoria, as part of a Maroondah Youth Well-being and Consultation Project (Chin et al. 2016b). The aims of this project were threefold: (1) to collect data to provide each participating school with an overview of their students' well-being across the various year levels, (2) to equip individual schools with the capacity to design tailored well-being interventions that would meet the needs of their students; and (3) to combine data across all participating schools to be used collectively for community-wide planning and decision-making about improving well-being outcomes across the community. The Well-being Profiler also incorporated open-ended questions to seek ideas from young people about changes that could be made to further support them and improve well-being in the municipality. Identified themes and survey findings demonstrate that young people are insightful about their needs, struggles and aspirations, and that when provided with an opportunity to share their perspectives using an independent research tool, are candid and perceptive.

6 Future Directions for PosEd in Australia: Research and Practice

The enthusiasm surrounding PosEd in Australia has led to a rapidly increasing number of schools looking to embed it within their curriculum and pedagogy. This rapid uptake shows much potential for PosEd to mature and grow in the Australian context, yet it also raises areas for concern, with some practitioners experiencing difficulties making programs stick (White 2016), implemented programs being rushed and underdeveloped, and research not able to keep pace with the application. We explore some of these concerns and recommend directions for future research and practice in Australia.

Research with Diverse Populations. PosEd is quickly becoming an extensively utilised framework for schools looking to benefit student well-being and academic outcomes. It is being implemented to varying degrees across public and private, urban and rural, co-ed and unisex, religious and secular, as well as in primary and secondary schools in Australia. However, further efforts to study PosEd across these varied and diverse populations are still needed.

As we noted above, to our knowledge, the most comprehensive PosEd evaluation programs are primarily taking place in schools that have taken the lead in implementing the whole-school approach. Two independent schools—GGS (Victoria) and St Peter's College (SPC) (South Australia)—are good examples. While these evaluations have yielded valuable and promising results about the potential outcomes of PosEd in these schools (e.g. Kern et al. 2014, Kern et al. 2015a;

Vella-Brodrick et al. 2014, 2015; White and Waters 2015), generalising the findings remains a challenge due to the unrepresentative nature of these high socio-economic and well-resourced schools and students, as well as the difficulties in finding comparable control groups.

At present, little empirical evidence at the whole-school level exists about the efficacy of PosEd in schools that hold more diverse student profiles. This includes schools with lower socioeconomic students, as well as those from more diverse sociocultural backgrounds, such as refugees, migrants, and indigenous Australian students. Indeed, there is evidence that some of the activities typically employed in PosEd, such as conveying gratitude or expressing optimism, are more effective in participants of Anglo or Celtic heritage than those from other backgrounds (e.g. Boehm et al. 2011; Layous et al. 2013), suggesting that their benefits do not necessarily extend universally across cultures. Thus, caution needs to be exercised when generalising the results of these well-known and established PosEd programs to more diverse schooling demographics in Australia. To help address this, a currently funded project being conducted by the Centre for PP is evaluating PosEd in public schools with more diverse student populations and findings should be available in the coming months.

Notwithstanding this need for research across diverse student samples, some more tailored applied approaches are available and may be more relevant for students who possess specific needs and where standard forms of PosEd may not be applicable. One example of this is trauma-informed PosEd (see above), which was developed for vulnerable students who have experienced or have witnessed traumatic stressors. Other programs have also shown some success with disadvantaged communities, including positive behavioural intervention and supports (e.g. Carr et al. 2002), and SEL (e.g. Tolan et al. 2015; Wiley and Siperstein 2015). These tailored approaches are promising because they consider the unique circumstances and needs of the recipients, yet ongoing research is still needed to test the efficacy of such programs.

A Systems Approach. PosEd, with its roots in PP, is a field that is heavily embedded in models of individual behaviour change. Thus, PosEd research has typically focused on programs underpinned by specific interventions, generally implemented within a single school setting (Kristjánsson 2012; Waters and Stokes 2013). For example, studies conducted with students in Australia and internationally suggest that interventions focused on fostering gratitude, a sense of hope for the future, growth-mindsets, and mindfulness are associated with positive outcomes in students, such as enhanced well-being or academic performance (Waters 2011). But these programs do not take into account the interrelated social and contextual factors that have been shown to be important potential antecedents for the mental health and well-being of young people (Currie et al. 2012). Systems approaches offer an alternative to individual behaviour change interventions in schools and better consider complexity by developing interventions that focus on changing the structures of the system. A system is defined as “a set of things...interconnected in such a way that they produce their own pattern of behaviour over time” (Meadows and Wright 2008, p. 2).

Systems approaches generally consider three key aspects (Williams and van't Hof 2016). First, they seek to understand *interrelationships*, or how different elements within a system are connected to each other and the consequences that follow across related elements when one of them is impacted. The education system has many objects and processes that are connected in multiple ways and impacting one of them may have cascading consequences which need to be understood. Second, systems approaches consider multiple *perspectives* across a range of people involved in the system, including how different perspectives affect people's behaviour or affect the success judgments of any improvement initiative. Teachers, students and parents, for example, may possess unique thoughts and perspectives and it may benefit efforts to consider such differences. Third, there is an effort to understand the *boundaries* of the system, which involves considering what is included and excluded from it. A boundary determines what is considered relevant or irrelevant, worthwhile or not, who gets what kind of resources for what purpose, and whose interests are marginalised. For example, a school intervention might only include students and staff at a school, or it could extend to include siblings, parents or the local community.

Systems approaches help identify pathways and key factors that influence individual and collective well-being. Once identified, specific factors such as policies, resource allocations, relational structures, community norms and values, as well as skills and attitudes can be targeted, while keeping in mind the broader range of influences on any given action (Foster-Fishman et al. 2007). By first evaluating the system across a broad range of inter-relationships and perspectives, systems approaches are better situated to consider contextual factors as well as potential unintended consequences that programs might cause. Enablers within the system can be identified and activated, while barriers can be proactively addressed. Systems approaches are also more likely to be effective and sustainable because additional levers for change are targeted and triggered (Kern et al. 2015b).

An example of an education intervention that illustrates a systems approach is the Gatehouse Project, an initiative designed to promote the health and well-being of young people by increasing student connectedness. The project was conducted in Victorian secondary schools between 1996 and 2001, and adopted a flexible and iterative action research process for promoting sustainable whole-school change (Bond and Butler 2009). The intervention drew on the work of systems thinkers including Senge, Argyris, and Fullan and was considered as a 'process of change' rather than a product or program to implement.

The project considered existing inter-relationships and how things were already connected within the schools, rather than simply adding another single program to the curriculum. Moreover, one of the explicit goals of the project was to strengthen the relationships between students and teachers, as well as students and the school (Bond and Butler 2009). One of the ways this project considered the different perspectives of those involved was by providing facilitators/critical friends to schools. Their role was an important one and included building relationships with the teachers to gain an understanding of their perspectives, the school's culture, and its practices. They also provided this feedback to the research team which subsequently changed some processes during implementation (Butler et al. 2011).

Evidence across 25 secondary schools supported a sustained reduction in the health risk behaviours in the intervention schools at four-year follow-up (Patton et al. 2006). From a systems perspective, the approach employed in the Gatehouse Project suggests that having a broad focus on school climate and student connectedness may be more effective than specific, single issue focused programs addressing a specific behaviour (Bond et al. 2004). However, the complexity of implementing a multi-focused intervention requires long-term commitment by schools and the recognition that they are not merely ‘quick fixes’, but instead require on-going support, effort, and modification. Future PosEd programs should consider strategies for incorporating systems approaches into change process within an educational community.

Strategies for Lasting Change. While the prompt uptake of PosEd is promising for the field, the question arises as to how the programs can be sustainable (White 2016). Challenges include lack of endorsement of PosEd programs by staff or leadership, student disengagement with PosEd curricula, confusion over what PosEd is and what good implementation looks like, and the need to evaluate the longer-term course and impact of programs. We explore these challenges in the following paragraphs.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges involves staff and leadership support for incorporating PosEd into a school, with many being detached and disengaged with PosEd curricula. If time-poor teachers are asked to implement curricula, but do not understand what PosEd is or why it should be incorporated into an already packed schedule, programs can be thwarted and efforts halted. In serious cases, disengaged teachers may model behaviours that send a subversive message to the intentions of the implemented programs, potentially undermining the progress of receptive students. For programs to be sustainable, there is a need to help all staff and key stakeholders take ownership of the program. This does not mean silencing sceptical voices—some of the biggest critics become the greatest advocates once their perspective and needs are considered. As such, programs may benefit from beginning with staff, helping them to feel like an active part of the change process, and spending time and resources to provide proper training and support for teachers.

Second, student disengagement can be a problem, with some students stating that PosEd classes can be too broad and unrelated to young people’s everyday experiences (e.g. Vella-Brodrick et al. 2015). Effort should be given to refining programs to make it engaging and meaningful for students. Vella-Brodrick et al. (2014, 2015), for example, conducted focus groups with a range of students and revealed that students are more engaged with PosEd when it is taught experientially, and when the delivery is less ‘academic’ in nature. Students also wanted teachers to use real-world examples, applicable to their age group, and to demonstrate consistency in content delivery and in modelling the aspired behaviours. Such insights offer valuable lessons about delivery modes for PosEd curricula. At the same time, PosEd claims to draw on best learning practices from education, and hundreds of years of pedagogical development both in Australia and globally should not simply be discarded. What best practice approaches look like for PosEd is a challenge for the future.

Third, excitement by some over PosEd and PP concepts can lead to exaggerated claims over what PosEd can and will do—a dialogue often devoid of nuance and context (McNulty and Fincham 2012). While the interest in PosEd in Australia is positive, it can quickly become counterproductive if implementation is rushed, delivered as a once-only program and there are unrealistic expectations about the outcomes that are achievable. While PosEd may indeed have mental health benefits for some young people, evidence suggests that it is not a blanket panacea for psychological distress, with factors such as age and year-level potentially overriding lasting benefits (e.g. Vella-Brodrick et al. 2014). While we are hopeful that PosEd will help prevent the growing mental health crises of young people, the programs have not been around long enough for us to know the long-term benefits or consequences of different programs. Further, it is important to recognise that each school is unique and is contained within a ‘noisy’ context, which is likely to have implications for the efficacy of PosEd programs.

Crucially, rushed short-term programs and over-expectations may create false expectations for students—leaving some disheartened, anxious and perhaps worse-off when experiencing quite natural dips and declines in well-being (Diener et al. 2006). Care needs to be taken to ensure that students, staff, and other stakeholders have realistic expectations of what to expect from any given program or strategy. Schools need to understand that sustainable change occurs slowly, and often the positive effects are not immediately evident. By setting realistic expectations and adopting a long-term plan of embedding PosEd in the day-to-day operations of the school and providing booster sessions to supplement specific PosEd programs, this may help avoid rushed implementation efforts and discouragement when setbacks occur, while also aiding program sustainability.

Finally, only a handful of studies have investigated longer-term consequences of PosEd programs (e.g. Marques et al. 2011; Vella-Brodrick et al. 2015). Building character and capability is a long-term process, and the impact of intervention efforts may not be visible for years to come (Kumkale and Albarracín 2004). Further work is needed that tracks students across life’s transitions into tertiary education, the workforce, relationships, and beyond. While a recent government funded project led by Vella-Brodrick along with a Victorian local government will examine the longer-term outcomes beyond the school context, there remains a need for further research assessing the lasting effects of whole-school programs. This includes programs that are rolled out over hundreds of students with mixed-methods approaches (e.g. self-reports, experience sampling, biological data, academic test scores, awards, medical records) that measure well-being as well as other socially-valued outcomes. The work by Vella-Brodrick and colleagues (Chin et al. 2015; Vella-Brodrick et al. 2014, 2015) adopts a comprehensive measurement approach including in the moment sampling using the *Wuzzup* app, biophysio data (salivary cortisol and heart rate reactivity), academic performance, student focus groups and on-line well-being surveys that assesses the full spectrum of mental health—from mentally ill-health to flourishing. While this is a start, more work of this nature is needed with a broader

range of samples, which is likely to require substantial funding resources to achieve. Hence, a priority for the immediate future is to secure funding to enable this comprehensive research to be conducted.

7 Concluding Thoughts: Towards a Positive Future for PosEd in Australia

With the national prevalence of pathology in Australian youth today, policy makers and educators are eager to organise efforts to reverse these trends. Educational systems are uniquely placed to aid this objective, providing a window to instil important life skills during a critical phase of child development. While this opportunity offers much potential for preventative efforts to occur, care needs to be taken to ensure that PosEd programs are not a short-lived fad, but are instead sustainable, targeted, and sensitive to the context of each school and the specific needs of the students. Methodical evaluation, using evidence-based and comprehensive measurement tools, may help schools in this regard. Schools should also consider using systems approaches to progress implementation efforts, as well as take care to promote key stakeholder buy-in through all stages of the change process. Future research needs to continue to explore PosEd with more diverse population demographics, using long-term follow-up strategies.

PosEd is a young field, requiring ongoing research to identify the underlying processes that aid program success. Practitioners and educators are united in this front to improve the well-being of young people, but the enthusiasm needs to be balanced with careful consideration, thoughtful planning, funding, and open discourse about the limitations of programs and the field. With the ample concern, care, and compassion that educators have for the young people in their care, along with the latest research initiatives, we are optimistic that the field will journey along the right path.

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Social and Emotional Competence and At-Risk Children's Well-Being: The Roles of Personal and Interpersonal Agency for Children with ADHD, Emotional and Behavioral Disorder, Learning Disability, and Developmental Disability

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Abstract Social and emotional competence has attracted significant and increasing theoretical and research attention. Drawing on Bandura's social-cognitive theory, social and emotional competence is defined in terms of children's personal agency (competence beliefs, perceived control) and interpersonal agency (peer relationships, teacher–student relationships, parent/carer–child relationships, social support). Personal agency and interpersonal agency are desirable ends in themselves and also an important means to other desirable ends (e.g., academic achievement, health and well-being). A bulk of research has investigated social and emotional competence among “mainstream” populations. Relatively less systemic attention has been directed to “at-risk” children. This chapter explores the role and relevance of personal and interpersonal agency in at-risk children's academic, personal, and social well-being. For each of four at-risk groups—children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), emotional and behavioral disorder, learning disability, and developmental disability—the chapter identifies personal and interpersonal agency factors that are critical to well-being. The theory and research described in the chapter clearly show that social and emotional competence, by way

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of personal and interpersonal agency, plays a fundamental role in at-risk children's well-being outcomes. Following from this, directions for practice are discussed.

Keywords Social and emotional competence · Social and emotional learning · Social-cognitive theory · Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) · Emotional and behavioral disorder · Learning disability · Developmental disability

Social and emotional learning is based on practices aimed at promoting individuals' social and emotional competence (Weissberg et al. 2015). Social and emotional learning promotes social and emotional competence by way of positive environments that foster safety, care, and mental health (Weissberg et al. 2015). In turn, social and emotional competence leads to positive academic, personal, and social well-being outcomes (e.g., Brock et al. 2008; Tarbetsky et al. 2017 this volume). This chapter explores key social and emotional competencies as relevant to at-risk children. Drawing on social-cognitive theory (Bandura 2001), social and emotional competence is defined in terms of children's personal agency (competence beliefs, perceived control) and interpersonal agency (peer relationships, teacher–student relationships, parent/carer–child relationships, social support). A good deal of research has investigated social and emotional competence among “mainstream” populations. Less attention has been directed to “at-risk” children. The term “at-risk” has wide connotations and can traverse difficulties associated with socioeconomic status through academic, mental, and physical health status. In this chapter, the term is operationalized under an educational/academic umbrella by way of the authors' respective areas of research specialization: attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD; Martin), emotional and behavioral disorder (O'Neill), learning disability (Cumming), and developmental disability (Strnadová).

1 Social-Cognitive Theory and Social and Emotional Competence

Under social-cognitive theory, human agency is defined in terms of key personal attributes and salient socio-structural influences (Bandura 2001). These personal and interpersonal factors are centrally relevant to agentic thought, behavior, and emotion (Bandura 1997, 2001). Personal agency refers to factors central to achieving desirable ends for oneself (Smith et al. 2000). Two such personal agency factors are competence beliefs and perceived control (Bandura 2001; Smith et al. 2000). Interpersonal agency refers to one's interactions with others and the role of these interactions in bringing about desirable ends (Smith et al. 2000). Thus, for example, as relevant to academic well-being, relational support from teachers, peers, and parents is critical (Martin and Dowson 2009; Wentzel 2010).

With respect to social and emotional competence, the Collaborative for Social, Academic, and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2013) outlines five core social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, social awareness, and responsible decision making. It is the former three that have particular relevance to social-cognitive theory. According to CASEL (2013; see also Weissberg et al. 2015), self-awareness is concerned with confidence and knowing one's strengths. It is thus relevant to social-cognitive theory's competence beliefs. Self-management is concerned with regulation of thought, emotion, and behavior. It is thus relevant to social-cognitive theory's control dimension. Relationship skills are concerned with establishing and maintaining high-quality relationships through effectively communicating, listening, cooperating, and helping. It is thus representative of social-cognitive theory's interpersonal agency dimension.

Importantly, educational practitioners play an important role in promoting children's personal agency (competence beliefs, perceived control) and interpersonal agency (relationships). For example, teachers instruct and model these social and emotional competencies and provide opportunities for children to practice and apply them (Bandura 2001; Weissberg et al. 2015). In addition, these social and emotional competencies impact many well-being outcomes in the forms of achievement, motivation, school enjoyment, mental health, and life satisfaction (e.g., Bandura 2001; Durlak et al. 2011, 2015; Humphrey 2013; Martin and Dowson 2009; Rhoades et al. 2011).

2 A Closer Look at Personal and Interpersonal Agency

Conceptual and operational congruencies across social-cognitive theory and the CASEL framework suggest three factors relevant to children's personal and interpersonal agency: competence beliefs, perceived control, and interpersonal relationships. Each of these is defined and explained in turn.

2.1 *Competence Beliefs*

Competence beliefs encompass self-efficacy, self-concept, and self-esteem (Marsh 2007; Marsh et al. 2016; Martin 2007, 2009). Self-efficacy refers to a belief in one's capacity to accomplish a given task (Bandura 2001; Law et al. 2012; Schunk and Miller 2002). Thus, it tends to be task and activity specific. Self-concept refers to conceptions of one's ability and capacity in a given domain (e.g., in mathematics or in one's social life). Self-esteem refers to more global appraisals of self (Marsh 2007; Marsh et al. 2016). Competence beliefs impact the tasks children choose to undertake, the functions required to perform those tasks, and the willingness and capacity to persist to task completion (Bandura 2001).

2.2 *Perceived Control*

Perceived control encompasses factors such as personal control, locus of control, autonomy, self-directedness, and the like (Skinner 1996). As relevant to personal agency, this chapter focuses on perceived control as reflecting a child's belief that he/she knows how to influence outcomes in his/her life (see also Bandura and Wood 1989; Connell 1985; Martin 2007, 2009). This notion of control is based on the premise that individuals are inherently motivated to control their own actions and their environment (Bandura 2001). It also encompasses a capacity to direct personal resources to actions that enhance and maintain one's capacity for control (Schindler and Tomasik 2010).

2.3 *Interpersonal Relationships*

According to Bandura, "people do not live their lives in isolation. Many of the things they seek are achievable only through socially interdependent effort" (2001, p. 13). Interpersonal relatedness is reflected in an individual's care for and acceptance of others and feeling cared for and accepted by others (Deci and Ryan 2012; Martin and Dowson 2009). Alongside social-cognitive theory, the "need to belong" hypothesis proposes that "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (Baumeister and Leary 1995, p. 497). The fulfillment of this need creates a basis for academic, social, and emotional development (De Leon 2000; Gutman et al. 2002; Pianta et al. 2012). These effects traverse support from the teacher (Martin and Dowson 2009) and also peers and parents (Bempechat and Shernoff 2012; Furrer and Skinner 2003; Liem and Martin 2011; Mansour and Martin 2009; Martin et al. 2007, 2009; Pomerantz and Moorman 2010).

2.4 *At-Risk Children, Social and Emotional Competence, and Personal and Interpersonal Agency*

As noted above, a great deal of theory and research has addressed social and emotional competence among "mainstream" or "regular" populations, with less attention directed to "at-risk" children. This chapter explores the role and relevance of personal and interpersonal agency for each of four at-risk groups: children with ADHD, emotional and behavioral disorder, learning disability, or developmental disability.

2.5 Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

2.5.1 What Is ADHD?

ADHD is defined as “a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development” (American Psychiatric Association 2013, p. 59). It is estimated that about 3–5% of children are diagnosed with ADHD and about three times as many males as females (Purdie et al. 2002). At least 70% of cases persist into adolescence and adulthood (Barkley 2006; Purdie et al. 2002). Seminal psychological models of ADHD tend to emphasize impairments with self-regulation and executive functioning (e.g., Barkley 2006). Consistent with these models, children with ADHD tend to have difficulties with planning, organizing, task switching, problem solving, impulse control or inhibition, working memory, and other executive functions (Barkley 2006; Pennington and Ozonoff 1996).

Problematic outcomes experienced by children with ADHD are well documented (see Barkley 2006). For example, the executive functions impaired by ADHD are critical for children to successfully navigate the demands in their academic life (Pennington and Ozonoff 1996). Not surprisingly, then, children with ADHD are deemed to be an academically at-risk population (Burns and Martin 2014; Martin 2013; Martin and Burns 2014): They have increased risk of grade retention, poorer academic achievement, and higher levels of disruptive classroom behavior and school exclusion (Barkley 2006; Biederman et al. 2004; Martin 2014b). It is important to identify factors and processes that may reduce these negative academic outcomes. We propose social-cognitive theory and its personal and interpersonal agency factors (by way of competence beliefs, perceived control, and interpersonal relationships) as a potentially effective means to do so (see also Martin et al. 2017).

2.5.2 Impacts on Personal and Interpersonal Agency

With respect to competence beliefs, researchers have found that children with ADHD may perceive themselves and their capacities in more negative terms than children without ADHD. For example, Dumas and Pelletier (1999) found that children with ADHD reported lower levels of perceived scholastic competence. Similarly, Tabassam and Grainger (2002) found children with ADHD were lower in self-efficacy when compared with non-ADHD peers. With regard to control, it is noteworthy that research has identified diminished self-control as a feature of ADHD (e.g., Barkley 2006). Moreover, because of the self-regulatory difficulties experienced as a result of executive function impairments, other control-relevant processes and outcomes are affected for children with ADHD. For example, self-directedness, autonomy, and a sense of internal locus can be adversely impacted by the condition (Martin 2012a). In fact, the positive effects of medication on outcomes for children with ADHD have been attributed in part to the medication's positive impacts on

self-regulation and control (Frankel et al. 1999). Interpersonal relationships are also negatively impacted by ADHD. It is not uncommon for children with ADHD to experience interpersonal difficulties with teachers, peers, and parents/carers (e.g., Kendall 2000; Krueger and Kendall 2001). In turn, these can lead to a cycle of problematic interactions that are not conducive to optimal academic and personal development (Martin 2012a).

2.5.3 Impacts of Personal and Interpersonal Agency on Well-Being Outcomes

The research reported above shows that children with ADHD experience negative competence beliefs, reduced control, and poor interpersonal relationships. Without question, these are undesirable ends in themselves. However, to the extent that these factors are also significantly associated with well-being outcomes, then children with ADHD are placed at even greater disadvantage. We therefore ask: what is the impact of personal and interpersonal agency on well-being outcomes for children with ADHD?

Lamentably, there is little research investigating this issue. Recently, these factors were investigated with regard to their impacts on academic achievement. Harnessing social-cognitive theory, Martin et al. (2017) examined the influence of personal agency (self-efficacy and perceived control) and interpersonal agency (teacher–student relationships) on the literacy and numeracy achievement of children with ADHD (and their non-ADHD peers). A total of 164 children with ADHD from 20 “mainstream” schools were studied, alongside 4658 of their non-ADHD peers in the same schools and year levels. Findings showed that high self-efficacy and positive interpersonal relationships were consistently associated with higher academic achievement—with the positive effects significantly stronger for children with ADHD than for children without ADHD. Interestingly, the effect of perceived control was not so substantial, with the effect sizes on achievement for children with ADHD being about the same as effect sizes for children without ADHD.

There is also some research exploring the effects of factors that are implicated in competence beliefs, perceived control, and the like. Two recent investigations are relevant here—both focusing on children with ADHD. One examined the effects of academic buoyancy (capacity to bounce back from academic setback; Martin et al. 2010; Martin and Marsh 2008, 2009—see also Tarbetsky et al. 2017 this volume). The other examined the effects of personal best (PB) goals (striving to exceed one’s own previous best efforts or performance; Martin 2006; Martin and Liem 2010). With regard to the effects of academic buoyancy, Martin (2014a) found that academic buoyancy had a positive impact on achievement, participation, aspirations, and enjoyment for children with ADHD. With regard to PB goals, Martin (2012b) found a positive relationship between PB goals and the motivation, engagement, and achievement of children with ADHD.

Taken together, these investigations show that there are personal and interpersonal agency factors that are significantly and positively associated with the well-being of children with ADHD, especially their academic well-being. However, because children with ADHD are also lower than their non-ADHD peers on these very factors, they are poorly placed to attain and achieve at optimal levels. Educational practice and intervention must therefore strive to improve the personal and interpersonal agency of children with ADHD. Some potential practical directions are discussed further below.

2.6 Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD)

2.6.1 What Is EBD?

As an overarching diagnosable condition, EBD is not formally identified within the DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association 2013). The DSM-V does, however, include conditions such as conduct disorder and oppositional defiance disorder. A definition for EBD was provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (US Department of Education, 2004, CFR §300.8), that describes it as “a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics to a marked degree, over a relatively extended period of time, and that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

- (a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- (b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- (c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- (d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- (e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems”.

Clearly, then, there can be significant variability in how this disorder is named and defined depending on context and organizational perspectives (Kauffman 2015). Despite the variability in nomenclature, some state educational authorities in Australia continue to use this terminology when designating scores of segregated schools and semi-segregated units for students exhibiting emotional and behavioral issues (e.g., New South Wales Department of Education). Additionally, variability can extend to whether students with EBD are educated in “mainstream” or “regular” schools or whether systems and/or departments have designated schools for students with EBD. To note is the work of Graham and Sweller (2010) which showed that places for students with EBD rose dramatically in Australia from 1997 to 2007, suggesting they may start off in the “mainstream”, but move into a segregated setting for a good part of their education.

Behaviors associated with the disorder are numerous and can be internalizing (e.g., anxiety) or externalizing (e.g., poor behavior). The prevalence of EBD in the school population is low. Kauffman (2015) estimates the prevalence at 0.8%; however, he asserted that this is likely an underestimate. Bullis and Cheney (1999) put the prevalence higher at 2–4% of the school population. Children with EBD often have comorbid diagnoses of ADHD, learning disabilities (LD), and cognitive impairments (Hallahan et al. 2015). Alongside these “internal” comorbidities, there are also external and/or exacerbating factors such as dysfunctional family backgrounds (Kauffman and Landrum 2013).

Problems with skills and dispositions needed for academic success (e.g., self-management, persistence) are greatly impacted in children with EBD (Margerison 1996). They are often disengaged, producing little work or academic gain (Siperstein et al. 2011). Providing the required intensive academic interventions for these children can be difficult for educators due to aggressive and disruptive behaviors, coupled with low academic motivation (Sutherland et al. 2008). Socially, the above issues can also impact the development of peer, teacher, and family relationships (Kauffman and Landrum 2013). This group of children experiences some of the worst life outcomes in terms of school completion rates (Kauffman 2015), high levels of unemployment, and increased involvement with the law (Wagner and Newman 2015).

2.6.2 Impacts on Personal and Interpersonal Agency

It is a reality that due to their challenging behaviors, children with EBD are more likely to be educated in segregated settings than children with other disabilities (Graham and Sweller 2010). Interestingly, for some children with EBD, segregated settings may positively influence personal agency factors such as competence beliefs. For example, Fulk et al. (1998) found that children with EBD educated in segregated settings had a more positive view of school, displayed less work avoidance, and felt less alienated than counterparts educated in regular settings. Fulk et al. proposed that this was due to students receiving more intensive support in segregated settings and a lack of higher performing peers with whom they may unfavorably compare themselves. However, in later school years, researchers find a decline in self-concept for older adolescents with EBD educated in special education settings (Montague et al. 2008). They suggested that this might be related to the realization that they would not receive a high school diploma, limiting post-school options. Self-determination and self-advocacy skills can also be adversely affected for children with EBD (Carter et al. 2010; Morrison Cavendish 2006). Importantly, these skills are needed to improve their locus of control, sense of autonomy, independence, and self-regulation (Montague et al. 2008).

In broader terms, Sacks and Kern (2008) reported that children with EBD had significantly lower quality of life scores in all domains (general, self, relationships, and environment) than their peers without EBD. Prior to this, Lund (1986) found that children with EBD had significantly lower self-esteem than their peers without

disabilities. Leary et al. (1995) theorized that low self-esteem was a consequence of peer rejection, leading to maladaptive behaviors such as aggression and delinquency, in an effort to become accepted. In sum, it is evident that children with EBD demonstrate somewhat negative profiles with respect to personal and interpersonal agency; however, this may be moderated by their developmental stage and the environment within which they are educated.

2.6.3 Impacts of Personal and Interpersonal Agency on Well-Being Outcomes

Problems with self-regulation of emotions and the resultant externalizing behaviors can have direct effects on the peer relationships and well-being of children with EBD (Lynn et al. 2013). The results from early studies showed that children with EBD were rated significantly lower on sociometric measures of social acceptance than their peers without EBD (Sabornie 1987; Sabornie and Kauffman 1985). Children with EBD often associate with others with similar behavioral attributes in what Farmer and Hollowell (1994) referred to as social synchrony. Such affiliations can exacerbate negative behaviors such as truancy, lead to gang membership, and criminal activities (Bagwell et al. 2001). In turn, these can lead to adverse life outcomes.

Relationships with adults are also affected by the behaviors exhibited by this population. Teachers of children with EBD have reported having low self-efficacy (Jones and Chronis-Tuscano 2008), which in turn affects how they interact with and teach these children (Poulou and Norwich 2002). This then further negatively impacts the development of supportive teacher–student relationships (Mihalas et al. 2009). Likewise, parents of children with EBD report that their children’s mental health issues impact theirs and the family’s day-to-day lives (Sawyer et al. 2002), with families reporting high levels of strain (Taylor-Richardson et al. 2006). This strain adversely impacts parent–child relationships, further reducing children’s self-esteem and increasing maladaptive behaviors. Taken together, the problematic personal and interpersonal agency status experienced by children with EBD has negative implications for other well-being outcomes in their lives.

2.7 Learning Disability (LD)

2.7.1 What Is LD?

The term LD originated in the USA and is a mostly medical approach to defining and thinking about learning problems. The USA defines specific learning disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (US Department of Education 2004, Sec. 300.8 (10)) as:

a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. This term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. This term does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; mental retardation; or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

Australia does not officially recognize learning disabilities as a specific category of disability. The term learning difficulties is commonly used in schools, and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* applies to students with learning disabilities as described in the overall definition of disability: "...disability, in relation to a person, means: ... (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour" (Commonwealth of Australia 2006, p. 8).

Other countries, such as Canada, use a more educational conceptualization of these learning challenges. The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (2015) defines them as:

...a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from global intellectual deficiency.

The latter definition is more useful from an educational standpoint, as it describes the characteristics that are likely to impact children's academic and social functioning, and hence, will be used here. Not every child with LD exhibits all characteristics of the disability. And while the majority of children with LD have difficulties in learning, many also experience impairment in the areas of self-regulation and executive functioning, which may negatively impact their self-determination skills, along with their interpersonal relationships (Cortiella and Horowitz 2014).

Children with LD experience significantly poorer academic outcomes than their typically developing peers. Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) reported that up to 26% of secondary school children with LD earn average to above average scores in reading and mathematics, compared with 50% of children with no identified disability, while up to 23% earn very below average scores, compared to 2% of children in the general population. Children with LD typically earn lower grades and fail more courses than their general population counterparts, and half of all secondary children with LD have experienced serious disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion. These children also have higher dropout rates and lower rates of graduation. Learning disabilities persist into adulthood, and although some people with LD experience positive adult outcomes, many others experience employment difficulties, poor engagement with the community, and limited social lives (Johnson 1995).

2.7.2 Impacts on Personal and Interpersonal Agency

With respect to personal and interpersonal agency, it has long been recognized that children with LD typically demonstrate difficulties related to their disability. This is not due to low cognitive/intellectual ability; in fact, children with LD typically demonstrate a significant discrepancy between their achievement (that is typically low) and their cognitive/intellectual ability (that is higher) in one or more areas of: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, and mathematics reasoning (Vaughn and Fuchs 2003). Although the cognitive discrepancy method of defining LD has been debated, there is relatively greater agreement these discrepancies are characteristics of these students. Hence, although these characteristics are not intended to define LD, understanding them is important for more fully understanding LD and potentially for benchmarking progress as interventions are applied (e.g., Callinan et al. 2013).

Following these significant learning challenges, it is not uncommon for these children to experience lower levels of academic self-efficacy and general self-esteem than their peers with no identified disability (Klassen and Lynch 2007). Interestingly, however, for some children with LD it can also be the case that a lack of metacognitive skills may cause them to be overconfident in their ability to complete specific tasks. This can cause them to underprepare for tests and other assignments, which in turn, negatively impacts their academic performance (Klassen 2008; Klassen and Lynch 2007).

In terms of interpersonal agency, children with LD have demonstrated difficulties with peer relationships and social functioning. It has been estimated that up to 80% of children with LD are rejected by typically achieving peers (Kavale and Forness 1996), leading to higher rates of social isolation. Estell et al. (2008) studied social integration of children with LD in inclusive classrooms and found that these children were viewed as lower in social status by their friends. To compound these problems, children with LD are often aware of their difficulties with peer and adult relationships, as they self-report deficits in social competence (Kavale and Forness 1996). This social isolation and lack of social skills further contribute to feelings of inadequacy and poor self-concept.

2.7.3 Impacts of Personal and Interpersonal Agency on Well-Being Outcomes

Given that children with LD experience deficits in personal and interpersonal agency (especially in peer and adult relationships, self-concept, and self-determination), it is particularly problematic that these very factors impact academic and other outcomes for these children (Goldberg et al. 2003; Lackaye and Margalit 2006; Madaus 2006a, b; Zheng et al. 2012). Indeed, Zheng et al. (2012) conducted a study that provided an empirical explanation of how self-determination and self-concept affected the academic achievement of adolescents with LD. They

found as the level of the children's self-determination increased, so did their self-concept. They also found a significant relationship between self-determination and academic achievement. Their findings suggest that in addition to teaching academics, curricula should include concepts and activities that strengthen children's self-determination skills.

Beyond school, Field et al. (2003) assert that strong self-determination skills are significant predictors of success for young adults with LD who are accessing tertiary education. After interviewing children with LD in post-secondary environments, they identified that self-determination, along with environmental factors and personality characteristics, is crucial to the success of this population in tertiary education settings. The young adults interviewed felt that self-determined role models, instruction in self-determination (along with opportunities to make choices), and positive communication and relationships were instrumental to their success in achieving their goals at this level of education. Taken together, the research summarized here underscores the importance of personal and interpersonal agency for the academic and personal success of individuals with LD.

2.8 Developmental Disability

2.8.1 What Is Developmental Disability?

The term developmental disability is commonly used as an umbrella reference for intellectual disability (ID) and for some researchers and practitioners, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (Ashman and Elkins 2009). The present chapter focuses on intellectual disability, but where appropriate will also consider research relevant to ASD that speaks to broader developmental needs also pertinent to children with ID. Intellectual disability (ID; according to DSM-V intellectual developmental disorder, formerly mental retardation; in UK also referred to as learning disabilities) is a condition "with onset during the developmental period that includes both intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits in conceptual, social, and practical domains" (American Psychiatric Association 2013, p. 33). Academic skills under the conceptual domain include abstract thinking, problem solving, judgment in novel situations, as well as reading and numerical reasoning. The social domain includes skills such as: empathy, friendship abilities, and interpersonal communication skills. The practical domain comprises skills like money management and self-management of behavior (American Psychiatric Association 2013). People with ID vary widely in terms of their individual abilities and support needs. The prevalence of ID is generally estimated at 1% of the population (American Psychiatric Association 2013; see also the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2016).

2.8.2 Impacts on Personal and Interpersonal Agency

When it comes to personal agency factors among children with developmental disability, research in areas such as competence beliefs and perceived control is scarce or inconclusive. For example, Žic and Igrić (2001) found that the social self-concept of children with ID was lower than their matched peers. On the other hand, Begley's (1999) study of children with Down syndrome and Huck et al. (2010) study of children with ID reported somewhat more positive self-concept for this population of children, as compared to their counterparts without a disability. There also seems to be a link between gender and self-concept such that females with ID report a more positive self-concept than males (Begley 1999). With respect to perceived control, researchers in the field of developmental disability have examined self-determination skills among these children. Essential self-determination skills include self-efficacy, self-advocacy, self-awareness, and decision making (Wehmeyer 1996). Developing these skills in children with developmental disability is crucial, given the established link between these children's level of self-determination and their well-being outcomes in adulthood (Zhang et al. 2005).

The interpersonal agency of children with developmental disability has been examined in regard to relationships with parents, teachers, and peers. Children with developmental disability commonly experience loneliness and social rejection (Jones and Frederickson 2010; Lasgaard et al. 2010; Locke et al. 2010), and there is also a high rate of bullying reported for this population (Cappadocia et al. 2012). Teachers tend to have poorer relationships with children with developmental disability, often due to teachers' difficulties in understanding the children's challenging behaviors (Blacher et al. 2014). In order to assist children with developmental disability to cultivate social skills necessary for successful initiation and maintaining of friendships, social skills training needs to be provided. There are a number of evidence-based practices in the area of social skills development, such as video-modeling and self-management (Odom et al. 2010).

2.8.3 Impacts of Personal and Interpersonal Agency on Well-Being Outcomes

As noted above, the impact of interpersonal relationships on the well-being of children with developmental disability is clear. Further, given the strong link between well-being and academic outcomes (Noble and McGrath 2014), children with developmental disability struggle academically and this further entrenches their lower sense of efficacy and well-being. Danker et al. (2016) thus recommend that schools provide programs and resources to support children with developmental disability in order to enhance their well-being. They also identify an urgent need to provide teacher professional learning, along with awareness programs for peers, which would promote interpersonal agency and allow for better understanding and acceptance of children's diversity. Other work has demonstrated the positive results of interventions promoting self-determination for children with

developmental disability (e.g., Carrington et al. 2014; Shogren et al. 2012). Notwithstanding these promising results, there is a need for more research into the impact of personal and interpersonal agency on well-being outcomes for children with developmental disability. To note are some positive Australian-based initiatives in this direction (Dossetor et al. 2011).

3 Personal Agency, Interpersonal Agency, and Implications for Practice

Having identified the role and relevance of competence beliefs, perceived control, and interpersonal relationships (personal and interpersonal agency) in the well-being outcomes of at-risk children, there is now the critical question of how practitioners (teachers, counselors, psychologists etc.) might target and enhance these factors in children's development. Here we identify successful approaches identified in the literature and which offer direction for practice going forward.

3.1 Enhancing Competence Beliefs

There are many opportunities for practitioners to build children's competence beliefs. These include addressing children's negative thinking about themselves and their capacities (Martin 2010), adjusting lessons and tasks to better ensure children can experience success (Martin and Burns 2014), and "chunking" tasks and activities into manageable components to enhance completion (Martin and Burns 2014). It can also be helpful to individualize learning activities to suit learner needs (Schunk and Miller 2002) and improve children's goal-setting skills (Locke and Latham 2002; Martin 2012b) to build competence, and thus, heighten competence beliefs. Because at-risk children are more likely to experience academic adversity (Martin 2014b), it is important to also boost their academic buoyancy and academic resilience as threats to self-efficacy arise (see also Tarbetsky et al. 2017 this volume). Morales (2000) has suggested teaching individuals how to better recognize challenges when they emerge, seek out protective factors that have been identified to them (e.g., a supportive teacher, a counselor, a helpful peer), implement these protective factors to address the challenge, and sustain or refine the use of these protective factors as future challenge or setback arise. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a widely accepted and recommended framework for structuring instruction in a way that is accessible for all children through the use of multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression (CAST 2011). This framework is recommended for all children but is particularly effective with the at-risk groups described here from primary school to tertiary education settings (Field et al. 2003).

3.2 Promoting Perceived Control

A sense of control can be promoted in a number of ways. When practitioners draw a clear link between a child's effort (which is controllable) and his/her outcomes, this child is more likely to see his/her own role in development (Martin et al. 2015). It is also important that parents and educators give children appropriate levels of responsibility for their own behaviors and attitudes (Goodman and Burton 2010). For example, identifying how the child's effort and positive attitude contributed to a positive academic outcome (e.g., a pleasing result) promotes the child's sense of control over future academic outcomes. Providing multiple opportunities to respond and achieve in class is also important for children at academic risk (Sutherland et al. 2008). Feedback is another means of enhancing children's perceived control. For example, providing structured, timely, consistent, and task-based feedback on a child's academic work makes it clear how they can improve, thus boosting their sense of control (Hattie 2009, 2012). Autonomy-supportive environments also promote a sense of control. Autonomy support refers to the emotional and behavioral support provided by adults that nurtures and supports children's volition and sense of ownership in their development (e.g., Reeve 2009; Reeve et al. 2004; Reeve and Jang 2006; Tarbetsky et al. 2017 this volume). Autonomy-supportive practices typically involve scaffolded tasks and guided and supported choices as these tasks are conducted (e.g., Deci and Ryan 2012; Reeve 2009; Smith et al. 2015). Providing children with opportunities to make choices is an effective way to promote student autonomy and their sense of control (Zheng et al. 2012).

3.3 Improving and Sustaining Interpersonal Relationships

There are numerous ways to improve and sustain children's interpersonal relationships. One approach involves social skills training that explicitly teaches children how to interact positively with others and how to be more aware of social cues that help them get along with others (e.g., Hoza et al. 2000; Odom et al. 2010). As noted earlier, there are numerous evidence-based practices in the area of social skills development, such as video-modeling and self-management (Odom et al. 2010). Although generalization of skills from the training setting to other settings has been identified as a challenge, Peterson et al. (2006) found that teaching the skills in a variety of environments, and instruction in these skills significantly facilitates their generalization. Research has also identified the importance of educators and parents/caregivers being patient, tolerant and having a sense of humor, as well as prior experience working with or developing greater knowledge about at-risk children (Sherman et al. 2008). Martin and Dowson (2009) have suggested "connective instruction" as another means to improving relational support in the learning context. This involves educators connecting to children via three key channels: interpersonal (e.g., taking an interest in and getting to know

students), substantive (e.g., relevant and stimulating subject matter), and pedagogical (e.g., clear, structured, and direct communication).

4 Conclusion

Drawing on social-cognitive theory, this chapter has considered social and emotional competence in terms of children's personal agency (competence beliefs, perceived control) and interpersonal agency (peer relationships, teacher–student relationships, parent/caregiver–child relationships, social support). Whereas most theory and research has investigated these social and emotional competencies among “mainstream” children, there has been less attention given to “at-risk” children. For children with ADHD, emotional and behavioral disorder, learning disability or developmental disability, we identified personal and interpersonal agency factors important to optimize well-being. We also identified successful practices that can promote at-risk children's personal and interpersonal agency. In so doing, practitioners are better able to assist these children's journey through childhood and beyond.

Acknowledgements Thanks are extended to the Australian Research Council for funding parts of this research.

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Responding to the Unique Social and Emotional Learning Needs of Gifted Australian Students

Susen Smith

Abstract This chapter presents an overview of the multifaceted characteristics of intellectually gifted students, their social and emotional needs, and ways of scaffolding their social and affective growth for academic engagement from an Australian perspective. Generally, gifted students experience and respond to external influences quite differently to many of their same-age peers of average ability due to their asynchronous chronological and intellectual development and their social and emotional complexities. This asynchrony has implications for their social interactions, social and emotional learning (SEL) needs, programming, and provisions. Research reiterates that their unique characteristics require accurate identification and supportive educational provisions to enable the holistic development of their intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Recognising the unique characteristics and needs of gifted students and helping them to extend their skills to develop SEL competencies are preludes to enhancing their academic achievement, while consecutively promoting their personal well-being and healthy relationships.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Intellectually gifted students · Holistic needs · Supportive strategies · Healthy relationships · Well-being

1 Introduction

In the gifted education field, the socio-emotional characteristics and needs of gifted learners, sociocultural diversity, multi-exceptionalities, and ambiguity in provisions are key areas in current Australian research, discourse, and practice that are relevant to social and emotional learning (SEL) (Gross 2010; Kronborg and Plunkett 2013; Lassig 2009; Long et al. 2015; Townend et al. 2014). There is a body of research on the socio-emotional characteristics of diversely gifted students (e.g. see Gross 2010; Hoekman et al. 2005; Vialle 2012); however, empirical research on provisional

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effectiveness for supporting the socio-emotional growth of gifted students is weaker (Wiley and Hébert 2014). While over a century of wide-ranging research indicates gifted children can have advanced socio-emotional development commensurate with their advanced intelligence, many environmental and psychosocial influences can inhibit or promote their well-being and healthy relationships (Peterson 2009). Specifically, the concern here is with the SEL of intellectually gifted students (IGS).

In this chapter SEL will be discussed through the lens of the Collaborative for Social, Academic, and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2013, 2015) framework. Accordingly, a SEL programme engages students in constructive interactions, meaningful activities, and challenging learning tasks, using collaborative in-class and community interrelationships to support students' positive social and emotional growth (CASEL 2015). SEL focuses on helping students to use and extend their knowledge, understandings, and skills to develop five competencies: self-awareness (to understand their emotions), self-management (to self-regulate their emotions and behaviours), social awareness (to empathetically understand others), relationship skills (to engage in positive relationships), and responsible decision-making (to make constructive choices) (CASEL 2013, 2015). Of note, a number of state education policies and the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA 2015, 2016) adhere to the CASEL definition of SEL in their focus on students' social and emotional development.

With respect to conceptions of giftedness, most Australian educational policies use Gagné's (2010) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT). Gagné (2010) theorises that a gifted child is in the top 10% of the population and has superior untrained natural abilities within one or more human ability domains or potentialities that include: intellectual, creative, social/affective, and sensorimotor. Talent, however, needs effort, practice, consistent support, and systematic development to achieve excellence and possibly eminence. Accurate identification of psychosocial needs, along with educational support, influences the talent development trajectory. Underachievement remains until talent evolves.

Despite diversity in giftedness, many shared characteristics are evident in gifted children. For example, due to their asynchronous chronological and intellectual development, combined with their emotional intensities, many gifted students may experience and respond to external influences quite differently to others, particularly their same-age average ability peers (e.g. see decades of work by Gross 2010). As such, emotional dissonance and social vulnerabilities can result in particular characteristics, such as resilience, buoyancy, positive self-concept, motivation, volition, self-management, self-awareness, or confidence, are not present (Gagné 2010; Shechtman and Silektor 2012). While non-gifted students may share these characteristics, a combination of these characteristics are needed by IGS to support them through difficulties they may encounter that can impede talent development (Gagné 2010). For instance, many gifted students can become quite anxious about their asynchronous experiences and express their feelings in ways that might be misinterpreted as emotional immaturity instead of emotional confusion or intensity, especially profoundly intellectually gifted children (Gross 2010). This has implications for their social relationships, as well as their SEL needs, programming, and

provisions. Therefore, it is pertinent to recognise the complex interplay between characteristics, issues, and influences that contribute to the unique individual needs of gifted students in order to promote their personal well-being and healthy relationships.

As noted above, this chapter focuses on the experiences of IGS. Specifically, an overview of the multifaceted characteristics of IGS, their social and emotional needs, how they learn social and emotional skills, and ways of scaffolding their social and affective growth for academic engagement are presented. Implications for practitioners and future directions are also discussed.

2 The Unique Experiences and Needs of Intellectually Gifted Students (IGS)

Research on the cognitive and affective development of gifted students illustrates how IGS are unique from same-age average ability students in several ways (Clark 2013; Gross 2010). Depending on their age, and type or degree of giftedness, IGS may have a multitude of diverse characteristics that are specific to their expertise. They may exhibit cognitive characteristics, such as high inquisitiveness, advanced verbal skills, fast abstract processing, unconventional recognition of conceptual interrelationships, an intricately organised knowledge base, more efficient memory, and rapid learning (Clark 2013). They may display contrasting non-intellective social characteristics, such as being self-confident but perfectionistic, having high expectations of self and others, being cooperative but also dominant over others, recognising social difficulties and providing solutions, but at the same time questioning authority (Clark 2013). These different cognitive and social characteristics may influence emotional outcomes. For example, IGS's cognitive complexity engenders abstract thinking that can heighten emotional responses (Gross 2010). While emotional intensity can be the motivation for self-actualisation and achievement for many IGS (Jarvis 2013; Piechowski 2008), they may need to develop strategies for coping with unusually deep, intense, and multiple emotions, high sensitivity to others' needs, and an advanced sense of justice with high moral reasoning (Clark 2013). If effectively nurtured, this blend of characteristics can enable the emergence of talent.

IGS may differ from non-gifted students in other ways too. For example, Vialle et al.'s (2007) longitudinal study indicated that IGS's academic achievements were greater than their non-gifted peers, but the gifted felt sad, dissatisfied with social support, and misunderstood, despite their teachers rating IGS as more well adjusted and more well behaved, with less emotional problems than their same-age peers. Conversely, IGS's capacities can be developed productively or used less gainfully if they are not nurtured appropriately. For instance, Wolf and Chessor's (2011) research found that bullying was a social stressor in an unsupportive environment that can diminish IGS's affective experiences, such as self-concept, motivation,

and social coping. Anti-social behaviour, such as bullying, is a twofold issue for IGS, as studies show that they are likely to be intimidated, victimised, or bullied, while others show IGS as being bullies (O'Neill et al. 2014; Wolf and Chessor 2011; Vialle et al. 2007).

Perfectionism can also impact academic, social, and emotional growth, as perfectionism can be either positive or negative. Vialle et al. (2007) found that high-achieving students were conscientious, were hopeful, and held positive attitudes to school, while those who underachieved were not. Healthy perfectionists are usually highly motivated and use this trait to achieve their goals. However, dysfunctional perfectionism can inhibit progress. Disorganisation, anxiety, stress, and underachievement can result when dysfunctional perfectionists fail to meet their own high ideals and exceptionality (Blaas 2014; Bond 2013). Interventions such as counselling may address these concerns.

While a gifted child may well have a disability too, the characteristics of IGS without a disability still reveal remarkable similarities with children with disorders. Students with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), bipolar, or behavioural disorders display traits so similar that a gifted child can be mistaken for having pathologies (Webb 2013; Webb et al. 2005). For example, students with autism and gifted students may lack attention or communication skills, have intense interests, or have difficulty forming relationships (Webb et al. 2005). With similarities between characteristics, harmful misdiagnoses can result (Webb et al. 2005). It is not the individual characteristics, but how they are collectively exhibited over time, how they influence their well-being, and how they are comprehensively identified and addressed in various contexts. Thus, it is germane to raise practitioners' awareness of these analogous characteristics and provide accurate identification of IGS in order to plan for their individual educational needs.

Less advantaged groups may have additional SEL needs, such as some gifted Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, particular students with twice or multi-exceptionalities, or some gifted children from low socio-economic backgrounds or diverse cultural contexts where English is an additional language (Jarvis 2013; Vialle 2012; Wormald and Vialle 2011). For instance, students who have twice exceptionalities may have both superior cognitive capacities and learning disabilities (Wormald et al. 2014). Because of their unique combination of strengths and weaknesses, students who have multiple exceptionalities may develop social and emotional difficulties. For example, research has indicated that students who have twice exceptionalities may be more prone to having lower self-concept, which foregrounds cognitive processing difficulties and psychosocial problems (Townend et al. 2014). Psychosocial issues might cause frustration, demotivation, inappropriate behaviours, fear of failure, poor interrelationships, negative school attitudes, or lack of belonging. Conversely, students who have multi-exceptionalities can have many constructive characteristics, such as being creative, imaginative, insightful, having advanced ideas and questioning, problem solving well, being passionate if interested, being socially adjusted, and having a sophisticated sense of humour (Wormald and Vialle 2011). While they can use these strengths to bolster their self-esteem, for example by using humour sarcastically, their constructive

characteristics can be used to overcome adverse experiences (Gross 2010). Ultimately though, one of their exceptionalities may remain undiagnosed. As such, a substantial proportion of their needs may be overlooked, which will likely detrimentally influence their social and emotional development. Hence, early identification and intervention to facilitate the socio-emotional growth of students with multi-exceptionalities is apposite.

The unique cognitive characteristics of IGS are so dynamically intertwined with their emotional and social traits that addressing only the cognitive attributes may result in social exclusion and underachievement (Blaas 2014). Thus, IGS require holistic educational provisions that link cognitive and affective developmental needs (Assouline et al. 2015; Gross 2010; Vialle and Rogers 2012). Collectively, this section provided an overview of some of the unique social and emotional characteristics of IGS and associated issues. The close association between heightened intellectual capacity and emotional sensitivities was highlighted, along with the possibilities of misdiagnoses. The need to collectively address intellectual, social, and emotional needs of IGS during provisions was also reinforced.

3 Do Current SEL Programmes Support the Holistic Needs of Gifted Students?

There are a number of current SEL programmes in Australia, but little is known about whether these consider gifted students' needs. Thus, a brief overview of Australian SEL programmes that have the potential to meet the needs of gifted students is provided below. Foremost, there are whole-school CASEL-matched SEL programmes like the 'KidsMatter' programme (AGDH 2010) or the 'Social Skills Improvement System CIP' (SSIS-CIP; Durlak et al. 2015). These programmes are considered comprehensive and systematic, but flexible (Stafford et al. 2007), and fill needs-based gaps in schools' curricula, professional learning, and resources (Humphrey 2013). Importantly, evaluations have found these programmes are 'agents of change' promoting SEL, well-being, and resiliency for all students, but not necessarily for gifted students (Stafford et al. 2007). Next, there are specific programmes that include some needs of gifted students, for example, the PATHS curriculum (AGDH 2010), and the 'Primary Extension and Challenge' (PEAC) programme (Western Australia Department of Education 2011). While these have multiple delivery modes and address intellectual rigour combined with identified SEL needs of IGS, these are part-time withdrawal programmes and not a regular part of the whole-school curriculum.

Additionally, community-based consultancy programmes, like the Australian Gifted Support Centre's (2014) 'Stepping Stones Course', target many SEL needs of IGS. This programme supports skill development, such as anger management, emotional regulation, or friendship/relationship skills. However, the programme only focuses on SEL needs and not the holistic needs of the gifted child. Furthermore, a

broad range of extra-curricular enrichment competitions overlap school and community, such as Science Fairs, ‘Tournament of Minds’, ‘World Scholars’ Cup’, and the ‘Future Problem Solving’ programme (Eyre 2016; Ozturk and Debelak 2008; Smith 2015). These programmes can challenge IGS and nurture their cognitive, social, and emotional well-being holistically and collaboratively (Jarvis 2013; Kronborg and Plunkett 2013). Despite these SEL-relevant curriculums, many of these programmes (and other similar programmes) are yet to be evaluated.

In summary, it appears that current Australian SEL programmes for IGS are fragmentary ‘add-on’ withdrawal classes or community-based programmes, or are structured to serve all students, rather than creating responses specifically directed towards the holistic needs of IGS.

4 Strategies for Developing SEL Competencies Among IGS

Gifted education research has reiterated that gifted students require qualitatively different educational opportunities to address their holistic needs and achieve their potential (Gross 2010; Henderson 2007). Policies on gifted education around Australia stipulate the need to support the social and emotional development of IGS (e.g. DECD 2016). They reinforce that specific strategies are needed for IGS to link their academic, social, and emotional needs (Long et al. 2015; Vialle 2012). The research supports embedding explicit skill development within the school curriculum, so specific programming of SEL can alleviate many of the concerns that arise for IGS (VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh 2006; Stafford et al. 2007). This section provides ways of scaffolding SEL of IGS to support academic engagement, achievement, and well-being, based around the five interrelated cognitive, social, and emotional competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL 2007, 2013, 2015). Effective goal setting, resiliency (i.e. the ability to navigate major academic setbacks such as suspension, subject failure; Martin and Marsh 2008), buoyancy (i.e. the ability to navigate everyday academic setbacks; e.g. a poor mark, competing deadlines; Martin and Marsh 2008), motivation, self-concept, and self-regulation to promote the reversal of underachievement to achievement will also be elaborated (Gross 2010).

Self-awareness This first SEL competence refers to developing understanding of one’s emotions, values, strengths, limitations, and challenges (CASEL 2013). Many IGS are aware they are gifted, but do not really understand what giftedness is or its ramifications (Galbraith and Delisle 2011). Thus, teaching students to know themselves, their capabilities, strengths, and possibilities for learning is essential (Cross 2005). Projects on ‘exploring giftedness’ may assist the gifted child to understand why they feel different to many of their chronological and average-ability peers. Terry (2008) reinforced the value of problem-based service learning to engage IGS in community passion projects. These address their interests and abstract thinking

processes, increase their responsibility, and support their self-awareness, empathy, and reflective judgment. Passion projects produce opportunities for empathetic expression and compassion for altruistic outcomes (Cash 2011).

IGS have heightened awareness of differences between themselves and their more typical peers (Shechtman and Silektor 2012), but may not know enough to handle possible difficulties (Galbraith and Delisle 2011). Recent research in gifted education has reinforced the importance of student voice (Chandra Handa 2009; Terry 2008), so encouraging students to identify their own SEL limitations and needs expedites self-advocacy (Cross 2005). Opportunities to discuss their SEL needs allow IGS an outlet for their feelings, and, if this can be increased to dialogue that engenders empathy between the discussants (e.g. Socratic dialogue), then deeper analysis of key issues and values can be addressed to support empathic development (Harper 2013; Maker and Schiever 2010). Through facilitated dialogue, bibliotherapy allows gifted students to connect their own personal concerns with those emulated by literary characters. Bibliotherapy can enable IGS to understand the complex interplay between their characteristics, strengths, emotional concerns, moral decision-making, and behavioural outcomes (Prykaza 2013). Moreover, bibliotherapy assists with reducing anxiety and isolation, while increasing self-efficacy, resiliency, emotional self-regulation, and achievement (McCullis and Chamberlain 2013). Journaling also supports cognitive processing when writing about feelings and challenges (Cross 2005). IGS can use creative self-expression in dance or drama performance or other artistic productions to explore their own and others' emotions, while identifying defence systems can support emotional well-being (Bencik-Kangal and Ari 2013; Mueller 2009).

Self-management This refers to self-regulating emotions and behaviours by managing stress, increasing motivation, and learning goal setting (CASEL 2013). VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2006) espouse an affective curriculum for IGS that motivates academic, social, and emotional development. They advise proactively planning logical thinking strategies, information processing, comprehensive assessment, philosophical discussions, and variety in products and outcomes in project-based learning to explore topics of interest, emotions, values, key concepts, and attitudes. Consideration needs to be given to teaching IGS self-regulation skills to design and implement projects successfully and complete assignments effectively (Cash 2011).

An important element of self-regulation involves identifying and setting goals (Martin 2012). According to Martin (2012), using intrinsic motivation for setting realistic short-term goals for both effort and excellence can be supported through developing individual contracts with students. In addition, self-designed projects based on interests, choice, and well-designed goals can nurture self-motivation and support stress management. Role models, mentors, or biographies can be used to explore life experiences, personal struggles, goal setting, and how achievement occurred through effort (Smith and Laura 2009; Martin 2012). Of note, consistent practice with increasingly challenging goals is essential for IGS's SEL to assist buoyancy development (Gross 2010; Martin 2012).

IGS need to be challenged to manage more advanced academic tasks, while developing the resiliency and buoyancy needed to self-manage emotions within learning processes (Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010). For example, orbital studies allow students to self-direct their own learning, and develop research skills, while reducing organisational stressors (Tomlinson 2014). A recent study (North et al. 2015) elaborated the stressors associated with high pressure testing and concluded that group-based pastoral care programmes would enable IGS to understand and deal with their affective distress in response to academic pressure, competition, increased workload, and procrastination. For IGS, strategies to overcome emotional distress and diffuse stressors include: setting realistic goals; using diaries to meet deadlines; using consistent feedback to finish tasks; teaching time-management; and providing counselling to assist transitions to healthy perfectionism (Bond 2013; Galbraith and Delisle 2011; Greenspoon 2013). However, it is the collective use of strategies that needs consideration, for instance, challenging work combined with realistic expectations assists IGS awareness of self-imposed stressors (Christopher and Shewmaker 2010).

Presenting outcomes to authentic audiences encourages students to take risks, supports intrinsic motivation, and helps them to celebrate their success as they receive praise (Inman and Kirchner 2016). Taking risks helps in overcoming fear of failure and can lead to academic achievement (Gross 2010). However, IGS may have unhealthy perfectionist traits such as procrastinating, having difficulty making decisions, rejecting challenges if they lack buoyancy, not accepting mistakes, being dissatisfied with outcomes if they do not meet their own stringent expectations, being self-critical and critical of others, expressing frustrations inappropriately, being highly competitive, or having difficult relationships due to high expectations of peers (Bond 2013). Thus, it is important to provide support to minimise these experiences. For example, learning positive perfectionism traits balances these negativities and is exhibited in acceptance of both strengths and weaknesses and being able to manage behaviours. Self-monitoring their own progress helps students to develop positive perfectionism (Christopher and Shewmaker 2010). A safe classroom environment provides opportunities for healthy challenges to reduce frustrations, and for taking small risks and building up to larger risks (Landis and Reschley 2013). After risk-taking incidents, acknowledging positive outcomes or identifying relevant personal goals to work towards assists self-management (Bond 2013).

Another way self-management can be promoted among IGS is through positive personal best (PB) goals, which involves setting goals to meet or exceed a previous best performance or effort (Martin 2012). PB goal setting enables students to make learning choices, is intrinsically motivating, and reduces internal emotional conflicts (Martin 2012). PB goals may help IGS to develop self-control in decision-making, self-regulatory processes, skills in monitoring emotions, self-efficacy, higher expectations, and greater achievement and well-being (Morisano and Shore 2010). Some additional recommended strategies are as follows:

- scaffolding students through academically and psychologically enriching learning processes encourages outcomes satisfaction;

- nurturing links with specific neuropsychological functioning/signals using supports such as ‘think alouds’, graphic organisers, visuals, imagery, mnemonics, acronyms, analogies, or metaphors facilitates complex cognitive processing and behaviours towards appropriate outcomes/success;
- training mentors supports goal development based on extra-curricular student interests to enhance self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-regulation skills;
- reducing anxiety by providing learning choices and focusing on intrinsically motivated tasks with small step/proximal goals fosters efficiency/step-by-step achievement which builds resiliency/buoyancy to meet challenges and reduces underachievement;
- applying growth mindsets strategies for talent development, such as teaching that challenges are opportunities for growth, providing cooperative learning tasks to develop choice and self-responsibility, modelling mistakes and how to overcome them, providing consistent practice, and self-evaluation opportunities (Chandra Handa 2009; Dweck 2006; Gallagher and Smith 2013; Garn and Jolly 2014; Martin 2012; Morisano and Shore 2010).

Social awareness This refers to building understandings of others, expressing empathy, acknowledging ethical norms, and recognising supportive resources (CASEL 2013). Gifted children may have a different quality of emotional experience than non-gifted children (Piechowski 2008) and the more advanced the intellect, the greater the emotional intensity (Gross 2010). This emotional intensity is nurtured by strong affective memory and deep thought processes that are reflected in their advanced responses, such as showing extreme emotions, having complex interrelationships, asking provocative questions, restlessness, or feeling heightened fear or anxiety (Harper 2013; Piechowski 2008).

This intensity means IGS may have a greater capacity to feel more empathetic towards others (e.g. Harper 2013; Piechowski 2008; Shechtman and Silektor 2012). Hence, most IGS show concern for others and respond sensitively to other’s needs (Gross 2010). These feelings can motivate self-actualisation, advanced cognitive functioning, and their affective capacity for conceptualising problems, which can translate into solutions to society’s injustices (Smith and Laura 2009). However, this emotional intensity is often confused with behaviour disorders or learning difficulties and reflected in misdiagnoses mentioned earlier (Webb et al. 2005). Emotional intensity can also engender heightened curiosity, vivid fantasies, self-criticism, and having problems adapting to change which can result in lack of self-confidence, inappropriate behaviours, or misguided social exchanges (Piechowski 2008; Shechtman and Silektor 2012; Smith and Laura 2009).

Taken together, therefore, IGS have unique social awareness needs. One strategy for responding to these includes providing meaningful involvement in solving personal issues or real social problems through grouped concept-based learning—to use deeper complex thinking to develop awareness of multifaceted interrelationships between conceptual ideas, issues, concerns, and interests while practising their problem solving skills concurrently (Cash 2011; Chandra Handa 2009; Maker and Schiever 2010).

Paradoxically, social awareness of IGS can appear to be at extremes, from their capacity to empathise with others' perspectives, to having difficulties relating to same-age peers or exhibiting socially inappropriate behaviours (Harper 2013). These dichotomies between characteristics, behaviours, and negative and positive outcomes can be addressed sensitively by educators and families alike in developmentally appropriate learning environments (Chandra Handa 2009; Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010; Hoekman et al. 2005; Laura and Smith 2009).

If IGS lack a sense of justice or morality or the opportunity to use their leadership skills constructively during their development, there may be negative consequences, for example gang leadership, disruptive behaviours, dropping out, delinquency, criminal behaviour, or juvenile detention (Roepert and Silverman 2009). Hence, linking moral development with teaching understandings of various leadership processes and practising leadership skills in varying contexts may enhance favourable leadership attributes (Roepert and Silverman 2009). Students would benefit from working in a variety of grouping contexts to reinforce leadership and teamwork skills consecutively (Ozturk and Debelak 2008). Modelling leadership, tolerance, and problem solving can scaffold how IGS could use their unique characteristics more appropriately and ethically (VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh 2006).

Eddles-Hirsch et al.'s (2010) research indicated that schools that provide a range of formal SEL programmes and foster systematic SEL options result in positive social environments, a sense of community through extra-curricular provisions, more effective peer relationships, and academic achievement rather than maladjusted coping strategies. Hoekman et al. (2005) recommend using empowering social networks to provide challenging tasks for authentic audiences with meaningful outcomes to enable the twin goals of academic and personal growth.

Relationship skills This refers to engaging in positive relationship building with constructive communication, collaboration, and negotiated conflict (CASEL 2013). Neuroscience research illustrates that interrelationships between emotions and intellect have profound effects on IGS who may be more emotionally aware than same-age peers (Geake 2009). Research also reinforces the importance of high-quality relationships for supporting resilience development (Luthar 2006). For these reasons, IGS need to develop resiliency to deal with the depth of their emotions in relationships (Geake 2009). Luthar (2006) suggests some strategies for scaffolding resiliency: modelling messages; positive self-talk; using adversity to lead to positive outcomes; practising using internal and external emotional experiences; communicating resiliency attitudes; and nurturing social relationships through role-play and social skills programmes.

IGS's unique personal circumstances need to be considered to help them develop high-quality relationship skills. With intellectual capacities far beyond their chronological age, intrapersonal asynchrony arises. This means that the emotional maturity of IGS is usually beyond their same-age peers, but below their own intellectuality (Fraser-Seeto et al. 2015; Plunkett and Kronborg 2011). Moreover, when intellectual development far exceeds same-age peers, social interactions may

become difficult, so IGS need relationships with older peers of similar intellectual capacity to help meet their holistic needs (Gross 2010).

While the search for like-minded friends begins early in gifted children, finding friends who appreciate their advanced perceptions or understand their sensitivities is difficult (Gross 2010). Friendships become more sophisticated and complex the more intellectually gifted the students are and the older they become (Gross 2010). Difficulties in relating to same-age peers can be mistaken for social immaturity, when instead IGS need to be with older peers for socio-emotional satisfaction. Lack of social congruence with same-age peers can lead to pathological outcomes, such as loneliness, social isolation, depression, internalising anxiety or stress, low self-esteem, or perfectionism (Gross 2010; Mueller 2009). Hence, there is the need to be mindful of these possible difficulties for IGS.

Gifted students often need to balance the choice between friendships and achievement (Gross 2010). The well-being, self-esteem, and friendships of gifted and talented learners could be improved if they are scaffolded to interact with like-interested peers in extra-curricular opportunities. Small group role-playing can be used to explore competitive social issues as they arise (Bond 2013). Subject or grade acceleration can contribute to talent development by providing intellectual challenge, friendship-building opportunities, and remediating social difficulties to enable interaction with cognitively, socially, and emotionally equal peers (Assouline et al. 2015; Dare et al. 2016; Maher and Geeves 2014). Conversely, societal attitudes and misconceptions can inhibit acceleration based on concerns for IGS's social and emotional development, so acceleration is less frequently employed than it could be in Australia (Dare et al. 2016; Gallagher and Smith 2013; Long et al. 2015). Deleterious outcomes, such as emotional distress or social disengagement, can occur if gifted students remain in inappropriate learning environments with curriculum or instruction that are poorly matched to their individual needs (Gross 2010; North et al. 2015; Plunkett and Kronborg 2007). Therefore, IGS need accelerated provisions to reduce the risk of disengagement, underachievement, or developing socio-emotional or behavioural problems (Blaas 2014; Gross 2010; Maher and Geeves 2014). However, it is differentiated instruction combined with social acceptance within the accelerated context that will be most beneficial for IGS's socio-emotional development (Assouline et al. 2015; Chandra Handa 2009; Jung et al. 2011).

Responsible decision-making This final SEL competence refers to constructively making ethical, personal, social, and safe choices for collective well-being (CASEL 2013). IGS differentiate from many of their same-age average-learning peers in their exceptional, insightful, and efficient use of creative thinking processes for acquiring new knowledge or solving problems innovatively and quickly (Sternberg 2012). More recent Australian research asserts that IGS have superior metacognitive processing skills (Bannister-Tyrrell et al. 2014). Advanced metacognitive processes can make decision-making easier, more efficient, and more strategic for the gifted than non-gifted, and IGS are able to monitor their decision-making processes and amend strategies to achieve more positive outcomes (Ball et al. 1994).

At the same time, this metacognitive advantage suggests that decision-making for the gifted also has motivational, social, or emotional ramifications. Indeed, those who are most influential in their lives can moderate decision-making for IGS. For example, combined with their metacognitive awareness, moral characteristics, and ethical considerations, IGS generally make considered choices and responsible decisions that are respectful of their peers. Many IGS creatively express myriad intellectual and social and emotional energies with sophisticated moral and ethical responses (Piechowski 2008). IGS can express their moral concerns at a younger age and their moral promise increases the higher the intellect. They are, therefore, considered to have heightened moral sensitivities. Generally, IGS use higher levels of prosocial moral reasoning and empathy than their typical same-age peers (Hay et al. 2007). Their moral obligations are founded on advanced intellect, emotional intensity, sensitivity, and empathy combined.

Sternberg (2012) reinforced teaching moral reasoning processes, ethical thinking, and decision-making with real-life problem solving. Explicit instruction that rationalises immorality and social injustice assists in teaching moral reasoning skills (Prykaza 2013). A number of programmes can be used to enable IGS to fulfil their potential for high moral reasoning, such as Kohlberg's (Maker and Schiever 2010) discussions of moral dilemmas and creative drama programmes to increase moral judgment (Bencik-Kangal et al. 2013). Folsom's (2011) 'Teaching for Intellectual and Emotional Learning' (TIEL) programme endorses amalgamating teaching critical thinking skills and SEL. Crucially, supporting the gifted child's heightened empathetic and moral awareness should assist them to reach emotional maturity.

5 Implications for Practitioners

Further implications to attend to the unique SEL needs of IGS encompass: addressing misconceptions, integrating SEL into whole-school curricula, and fostering collaborative interrelationships (Mueller 2009). Each of these is addressed consecutively.

Overcoming misconceptions of giftedness Despite over three decades of Australian Government inquiries, numerous policies and empirical studies highlighting the disadvantage of chronological age classes, attitudes persist against gifted education (Commonwealth of Australia 2001; Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010; Fraser-Seeto et al. 2015; Gross 2010; Lassig 2009; Vialle 2012; Victorian Government Education and Training Committee 2012). These attitudes tend to focus on preconceived stereotypes of elitism (e.g. IGS do not need support). In turn, these misconceptions likely result in misdiagnoses, thus possibly inhibiting IGS provisions (Gross 2010; Maher and Geeves 2014; Peterson 2009; Vialle 2012).

Australian research highlights the impact of detrimental attitudes towards gifted education because without appropriate provisions, disengagement and underachievement become exponential (Fraser-Seeto et al. 2015; Lassig 2009; McCoach 2007; Rogers 2007; Vialle 2012). Misconceptions of gifted students' needs can

result in unchallenging curriculum, unnecessary content repetition, and lack of support that cultivates psychological distress and behavioural outcomes such as persistent boredom, frustration, and inappropriate behaviours (Geake and Gross 2008; Peterson 2009). Fortunately, more positive attitudes have emerged towards understanding gifted education generally (Lassig 2009), and consistent professional learning can inhibit lingering attitudes that feed misconceptions about giftedness as a prelude to more relevant practices (Geake and Gross 2008; Iizuka et al. 2015; Long et al. 2015; Rowley 2012).

Integrating SEL for IGS into the whole-school curriculum Teachers are influential catalysts for supporting talent development (Gagné 2010). Assuredly, scaffolding academic success reduces underachievement, nurturing feelings of belonging protects against depression, and providing multiple pathways in learning promotes achievement (Capern and Hammond 2014; Mueller 2009). Educators' duty of care extends to students who underachieve or disengage (Stafford et al. 2007). One of the earliest signs that indicate students are disengaged is the negative behaviours they exhibit. Assessing students' readiness for learning by linking SEL with characteristics, competencies, and behaviours can highlight their specific needs to be addressed (Stafford et al. 2007). Assessment should be wide-ranging and multidimensional, and could include qualitative processes inclusive of interest inventories, rating scales, anecdotal information, auditions, interviews, observations, cyclic feedback, with quantitative evidence of IGS achievement or lack of achievement (Smith 2015). Another way to inhibit inappropriate behaviours is to change teaching techniques (Kronborg and Plunkett 2013). Specifically, empowering students more within learning processes through provision of choice and collaborative decision-making will engage their interests and inhibit distracting behaviours (Chandra Handa 2009; Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010; Garn and Jolly 2014).

Integrating SEL into the school curriculum aids IGS (Iizuka et al. 2015). There are a number of strategies that are specific to the IGS needs, inclusive of flexible grouping, curriculum compaction, and self-regulated tasks beyond the curriculum (Eyre 2016). Vialle et al. (2007) recommend social skills education, such as guiding communication, collaboration, and problem solving using various strategies. Some curriculum models can be used to plan meaningful learning activities specific to the individual intellectual characteristics and SEL needs of IGS in classrooms (Chandra Handa 2009; Eyre 2016; Maker and Schiever 2010; Smith 2015). These include various models currently used in Australian schools, but are not limited to: Kaplan's Thematic Model that scaffolds inquiry learning (Kaplan 1993), Williams' Cognitive-Affective Interaction Model with strategies to meet the dual needs of academic and socio-emotional learning (Williams 1993), Maker and Schiever's (2010) DISCOVER Model using problem solving across varying learning preferences, Betts' (2003) Autonomous Learner Model, and Van Tassel-Baska's Affective Curriculum (VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh 2006). Acceleration is one of the most cost-effective and successful research-based strategies to support the holistic needs of IGS (Assouline et al. 2015). IGS have affirmed that they want challenging extension opportunities for their well-being, such as developing coping

mechanisms, dealing with competition, increasing motivation, and improving peer relationships (Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010). Generally, whole-school SEL programmes provide secure learning environments and support positive interrelationship building, but for these programmes to be sustainable, supportive school leadership is needed (Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010; Long et al. 2015).

Nurturing collaborative interrelationships to support teachers and students

Positive interactions between students and others influence academic achievement, learning engagement, and socio-emotional well-being (Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010). In particular, meaningful teacher–student relationships are foundational for SEL in the school context and promote IGS’s learning engagement to alleviate anxiety about achievement (Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010). Inherent in fostering productive student–teacher relationships are: showing interest in students; giving students enough time to complete tasks; explaining what is not easily understood; using additional resources beyond the textbook; allowing peer support; problem solving instead of punishing; not discriminating against students; taking jokes; and being respectful and honest (Capern and Hammond 2014, p. 60).

IGS may need counselling to guide them through the struggles they encounter with the dichotomy implicit in their asynchronous development and to overcome socio-emotional difficulties exacerbated by unsuitable placements, programmes, or provisions (Greenspoon 2013). However, IGS receive less counselling support than their peers, which is mainly psychological testing and for behaviour management (Vialle 2012). Counsellors could benefit from specialised professional learning to develop their understandings of IGS’s characteristics and needs to proactively support constructive programmes that integrate SEL strategies. Further implications for counsellors are to apply preventative and intensive interventions to assist students’ to overcome specifics, such as anxiety or stress to assist positive socio-emotional growth and to advocate for IGS (Vialle 2012).

As IGS need a continuum of comprehensive services, the classroom teacher needs to be supported to scaffold students (Smith 2015). Professional learning would support teachers to explore their own socio-emotional needs, the holistic needs of IGS, advocacy, and collaborations for planning for IGS SEL needs (Askill-Williams and Lawson 2013; Kronborg and Plunkett 2013). However, supporting IGS should be a collaborative process between all significant others, where interrelationships can be modelled and guided in various environments that provide external protective barriers for security (North et al. 2015). Coordinated collaborations, both in school and connected to the community, build positive interrelationships between the students, teachers, family, and significant others to support SEL interventions to address the range of experiences needed by IGS (CASEL 2015; Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010). If stakeholders, such as gifted students, parents, leaders, educators, academics, educational bodies, policy-makers, advocates, or associations, made a commitment to SEL principles, programmes, and strategies, guided by the CASEL (2015) framework, collaborative provisions across classrooms, schools, communities, disciplines, and healthcare services could eventuate for IGS (Eddles-Hirsch et al. 2010).

6 Future Directions for Research and Practice

While there is much research on the social and emotional needs of gifted students in general, there is little on the SEL of IGS. For those IGS who are underachieving or are disadvantaged, scaffolding their well-being will enhance their talent development. This section elaborates the need for more SEL programmes to focus on the holistic needs of IGS, more resourcing and research within the Australian context, increased student voice, and more rigorous longitudinal evaluations of SEL programmes for IGS.

Australian ‘research, policy and practice... are converging on a view of student well-being and academic success as being highly interrelated and mutually supportive’ (Stafford et al. 2007, np). For policy to support SEL practice (Long et al. 2015), many gifted education policies need reviewing and updating (e.g. see NSW Gifted Education Policy 2004). Further empirical research investigating links between IGS’s well-being, behaviours, and academic achievement needs to be undertaken from an Australian perspective (Stafford et al. 2007). Wiley and Hébert (2014) call for systematic research on the constructs that influence IGS’s socio-emotional growth within varying contexts. For example, empirical research could explore how differentiated instructional practice within flexible groupings supports IGS’s SEL (Gross 2010; Henderson 2007). More research on students’ perspectives may highlight their views on the SEL competencies, or enable assessing specific aspects such as resiliency, buoyancy, and self-concept. Interestingly, how these constructs are exhibited in gifted students who attend enrichment programmes are currently being explored (Smith et al. 2016).

If the quality of programmes impacts student outcomes (Dix et al. 2010), then further rigorous multi-method longitudinal evaluations of programmes are needed to address their sustainability (Durlak et al. 2015). While evaluating SEL programmes is crucial, ‘reliable and valid assessment tools are necessary to conduct needs assessments and monitor the success of SEL programs over time’ (Haggerty et al. 2011, p. 4). This suggests that innovative assessment tools specific to the unique individual needs of IGS are warranted, particularly for underachievers who might be more likely to display inappropriate behaviours and mismatched social interactions. This development should then be followed through with research-based programmes and more resourcing to meet the diverse SEL needs of IGS sociocultural groups (Jarvis 2013).

7 Conclusion

This chapter was concerned with IGS’s unique characteristics that can be exhibited so complexly that they require unique supportive strategies and educational provisions to enable the holistic development of their intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Founded on the CASEL framework, many research-based strategies can support

IGS's development of SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These supportive strategies can help develop effective goal setting, student resiliency, buoyancy, motivation, self-concept, and self-regulation to enhance their potential. Overall, regarding SEL needs of IGS, there are three key considerations. First, intellectually gifted students's asynchrony of social, emotional, and intellectual growth mean that many think, feel, experience, and respond to external influences differently to their same-age average ability peers. Second, the unique characteristics of intellectually gifted students necessitate comprehensive identification and unique teaching programmes and provisions to meet their individual academic and socio-emotional learning needs. Finally, educators, parents, and significant others can collaboratively use a variety of programmes, strategies, and resources to teach SEL to holistically support the social, emotional, and intellectual growth and well-being of intellectually gifted students.

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Teachers' Social and Emotional Competence: Links with Social and Emotional Learning and Positive Workplace Outcomes

Rebecca J. Collie

Abstract Social–emotional learning (SEL) involves curriculum that aims to teach students social–emotional competence (SEC) through capacities such as relationship skills and self-management skills. Although the research case for the benefits of SEL is gaining strength, this has overwhelmingly tended to focus on outcomes for students. Very little research has focused on teachers' outcomes. The aim of this chapter is to consider the relevance of SEC and SEL implementation for teachers. To do this, a conceptual framework based on Jennings and Greenberg's (Rev Educ Res 79:491–525, 2009) prosocial classroom model is introduced. The framework provides conceptual grounding for links between teachers' SEC, their experiences of SEL programmes, and outcomes for teachers and students. Next, research on teachers' SEC is discussed with reference to the impact of teachers' SEC for teachers' and students' outcomes. Following this, the relevance of SEL for teachers is discussed by considering the important roles played by teachers' beliefs about SEL, along with the impact that SEL programmes can have on teachers. To end, implications for practice, research, and theory that support the promotion of teachers' SEC and the extension of research on SEL for teachers are discussed.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Social and emotional competence · Teachers · Well-being · Motivation

1 Introduction

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is increasingly being recognised as an essential component of effective schooling and positive student development (e.g. Banerjee et al. 2014; Durlak et al. 2011; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2015). SEL involves curriculum that aims to teach students competencies in the social and emotional domains, such as relationship skills and

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self-management skills (Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) 2013). Evidence is mounting for the significance of SEL for students' positive outcomes, with researchers showing that SEL and its focus on promoting students' social and emotional competence (SEC) is linked with greater achievement and positive adjustment (e.g. Durlak et al. 2011; Humphrey 2013). At the same time, researchers are beginning to recognise the importance of SEL for teachers. Indeed, Humphrey (2013) argued that "SEL is for children and adults, each and every member of the school community" (p. 3). The consideration of teachers with respect to SEL implementation is a significant issue given that teachers' SEC plays a central role in determining how they undertake their work, the nature of their social interactions at work, and their social and emotional well-being (e.g. Collie et al. 2012; Klusmann et al. 2008). Moreover, teachers are often responsible for implementing SEL in the classroom (Jennings and Frank 2015). Thus, teachers' experiences with and beliefs about SEL drive their instructional practices in the area (Collie et al. 2015; Durlak and DuPre 2008). Further still, SEL programmes also have the potential to affect teachers—including developing their SEC and improving their well-being.

The aim of the current chapter is to consider SEC and SEL with respect to school teachers. Given the limited empirical work in this area, research from several different fields (e.g. education, psychology) is drawn together with the aim of synthesising and extending knowledge about teachers' SEC and the impact that SEL implementation may have on teachers. The chapter begins by introducing the guiding conceptual framework. Next, five key SECs elaborated by CASEL (2013), how they manifest among teachers, and their impact on teachers' and students' outcomes are introduced. Following this, the relevance of SEL for teachers is discussed by first referring to research on teachers' beliefs about SEL and then the direct impact of SEL programmes on teachers' outcomes. To finish, implications for practice, research, and theory are provided.

2 Conceptual Framework

In one of the first frameworks to consider SEC and SEL, Jennings and Greenberg (2009; see also Jennings and Frank 2015) describe a model of the prosocial classroom. In the model, teachers' SEC and well-being are shown to have reciprocal relationships with four important classroom-level factors: teacher–student relationships, classroom management, SEL implementation, and the classroom climate. Jennings and Greenberg establish that teachers who are higher in SEC and well-being (e.g. high psychological well-being and satisfaction with work, low stress and burnout) are more likely to build positive relationships, expertly manage the classroom, implement SEL effectively, and promote a safe and supportive classroom climate. At the same time, when the four classroom-level factors are functioning well, they reciprocally promote teachers' SEC and well-being. The model also shows that teachers' SEC and well-being indirectly influence students'

academic, social, and emotional outcomes via the four classroom-level factors. For example, when teachers are socially and emotionally competent, they create a supportive learning environment that, in turn, promotes positive student outcomes such as engagement in learning and high-quality interpersonal relationships (Jennings and Greenberg 2009).

In the current chapter, attention is focused on one of the relationships described in Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) model: the reciprocal link between teachers' SEC and effective SEL implementation. In addition, three further premises are proposed. It is suggested that the impact of teachers' SEC directly influences teachers' and students' outcomes such as well-being and motivation (premise 1); teachers' SEC is relevant to teachers' broader instructional practices (not only their effective SEL implementation; premise 2); and as per Collie et al. (2012), alongside SEC and well-being, teachers' beliefs about SEL are an important determinant of their well-being, motivation, attitudes towards SEL, and implementation of SEL (premise 3). In the next sections, supporting research for the relationship from Jennings and Greenberg's model and the three additional premises are discussed in relation to teachers' SEC, and then the impact of SEL on teachers.

3 Teachers' Social and Emotional Competence

It is well established that teachers' social and emotional well-being is essential to their functioning in the classroom—including their use of effective classroom management approaches, provision of targeted learning support, and creation of supportive learning environments (e.g. Kunter et al. 2013; McLean and Connor 2015; Shen et al. 2015). More recently, researchers have begun to formally consider the importance of teachers' SEC (e.g. Jennings and Frank 2015; Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015). Although there are potentially many different ways of operationalising SEC, five competencies suggested by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) have received significant attention in the student-focused literature and are the focus in the current chapter. The five SECs are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL 2013). With reference to the broader educational psychology literature, the SECs are introduced below, including how they manifest among teachers and their impact on teachers' and students' outcomes.

3.1 *Self-Awareness*

Self-awareness involves “understanding one's emotions, personal goals, and values” (Weissberg et al. 2015, p. 6) including knowing one's strengths and limitations, possessing a sound sense of self-efficacy and optimism, and having positive

mindsets (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015). Among teachers, this may be evident by teachers' awareness of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that they have or need to develop, their sense of self-efficacy about their work, and their positive states of mind about their own and students' current abilities and future development. Beyond the classroom, this may be evident in teachers' confidence and positive mindsets in interacting with colleagues and students' parents.

To date, researchers have yet to examine teachers' self-awareness as operationalised above. However, it has been assessed under a variety of related constructs and approaches in the literature. For example, there exists a sizeable body of research on the significance of self-efficacy for teachers' functioning at work (e.g. Collie et al. 2012; Holzberger et al. 2013; Klassen and Chiu 2011; Künsting et al. 2016; Ryan et al. 2015; Wang et al. 2015). Self-efficacy refers to teachers' confidence in their ability to bring about positive learning outcomes among students (Tschannen-Moran et al. 2001) and has largely been examined in relation to three core dimensions of teaching: student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies. Researchers have shown that teachers' self-efficacy in these areas is associated with greater job satisfaction, lower burnout, fewer symptoms of illness, greater work commitment, and lower quitting intentions (e.g. Collie et al. 2012; Klassen and Chiu 2011; Wang et al. 2015). Moreover, among US teachers, Ryan et al. (2015) showed that teachers' self-efficacy for classroom management is significantly associated with their teaching quality.

Turning to another component of self-awareness, researchers are also highlighting optimism's relevance to teachers' positive experiences at work. Desrumaux et al. (2015) showed that when teachers are optimistic about life, this is associated with greater well-being at work and in life generally, and lower distress at work (assessed as irritability, aggressiveness, anxiety, and depression). More recently, interest has been growing on the impact of mindfulness on teachers' and students' outcomes. Mindfulness involves paying attention to thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations in the present moment, along with self-awareness and self-compassion (Abenavoli et al. 2013). When teachers are more mindful in their daily interactions at work and beyond, they tend to report lower burnout (Abenavoli et al. 2013) and provide more effective emotional support to students (Jennings 2015).

3.2 *Self-Management*

The second SEC is *self-management*, which refers to regulating one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours; managing stress; motivating oneself; and setting adaptive goals (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015). In the classroom, this competence may manifest as teachers' efforts at regulation in order to engage respectfully with students and manage stress (e.g. minimise frustration, model appropriate behaviour), their enthusiasm and engagement in their work, and their ability to set clear

and effective goals. This competence may be evident in similar ways beyond the classroom in teachers' interactions with colleagues and parents.

Once again, empirical support for the importance of this SEC for teachers may be gained from research conducted in related domains (e.g. educational psychology). Self-regulation is one such domain that has received attention. Researchers have shown that cognitive self-regulation is important for lower emotional exhaustion and greater job satisfaction among teachers (Mattern and Bauer 2014). In other work, Klusmann et al. (2008) examined occupational self-regulation, which they define as the balance between investing and conserving resources at work. They demonstrated that teachers who exhibited a healthy self-regulatory profile tended to have higher job satisfaction, greater well-being, and were rated by students as being more effective in their instructional practices. More recently, Collie and Martin (2017) examined adaptability among Australian teachers. Adaptability has been positioned as a specific type of self-regulation and refers to the capacity to adjust one's thoughts, behaviours, and emotions in response to changing, novel, or uncertain demands (Martin et al. 2012). Collie and Martin showed that when teachers were able to adapt their thinking, actions, and emotions, they tended to experience greater well-being. Moreover, when teachers were adaptable and experienced well-being, this was associated with greater student achievement.

Additional domains of research relevant to self-management are coping skills, motivation, and goal setting. Coping skills can help teachers to manage their challenging work (Chang 2009) and have been shown to be important for reducing burnout and improving engagement and well-being among teachers (e.g. Chang 2013; Parker and Martin 2009; Parker et al. 2012). Motivation and goal setting are central to teachers' positive functioning at work having been positively linked with teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, work commitment, effective instructional practices, and students' perceptions of teacher support (Butler and Shibaz 2008; Collie et al. 2016; Schiefele and Schaffner 2015). Once again, understanding on the role of teachers' self-management comes from research conducted on related psychological constructs.

3.3 *Social Awareness*

Social awareness is the third SEC and this involves taking the perspectives of others (including those from diverse backgrounds), empathising and feeling compassion for others, understanding social norms for behaviour, and recognising resources and supports from family, school, and the community (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015). In teachers' work, this may be visible in various ways such as teachers' efforts to acknowledge and empathise with the perspectives of students, students' families, and colleagues; teachers' sense of compassion towards students, their families, and colleagues; knowledge of social norms for appropriate conduct in their interactions with different members of the school community (e.g. being

supportive and caring); and knowledge of resources that may support their teaching and students' learning.

Researchers in different fields have identified the importance of these different components of social awareness for effective teaching. For example, Perry et al. (2015) describe the importance of perspective-taking, compassion, and knowledge of appropriate resources for teachers who are working with at-risk youth—both for the students' positive outcomes, but also for the teachers' resilience and well-being. Swan and Riley (2015) suggested that empathy is essential for teachers to understand their students and, thus, provide appropriate emotional and instructional support. In other work, Domitrovich et al. (2016) examined a type of interpersonal mindfulness, which refers to awareness, openness, and compassion for others. They found that when teachers reported greater levels of interpersonal mindfulness, they also tended to report greater self-efficacy for behavioural management, greater self-efficacy for teaching SEL, and lower burnout.

3.4 *Relationship Skills*

Turning next to *relationship skills*, these involve establishing and maintaining high-quality relationships by, for example, communicating clearly, listening to and cooperating with others, negotiating conflict appropriately, and seeking and offering help (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015). In the classroom, this may manifest as teachers' abilities to interact in caring and constructive ways with students, utilise and model appropriate conflict resolution strategies, and seek or offer help to students as needed. Similar relationship skills are also central for teachers' interactions with colleagues and students' families.

The bulk of research relevant to this SEC has involved examinations of teachers' relationships with students and colleagues. Researchers have shown the significance of high-quality teacher–student relationships for teachers' well-being, motivation, and their provision of high-quality instructional support (e.g. Collie et al., in press; Curby et al. 2013; Klassen et al. 2012). Moreover, high-quality teacher–student relationships have been shown to have significant positive impacts on students' current and subsequent academic motivation and engagement, achievement, and positive adjustment (e.g. Collie et al. 2016; Hamre and Pianta 2001; Martin and Dowson 2009; Opdenakker et al. 2012; Wang et al. 2013). Teachers' relationships with colleagues and school leadership—including collaborative teaching efforts and informal interactions—also play significant roles with respect to teachers' well-being, motivation, and effective instruction (e.g. Collie et al., in press; Ronfeldt et al. 2015; Van Droogenbroeck et al. 2014). Finally, researchers have highlighted the significance of help-seeking behaviour for teachers' resilience and effective goal setting (e.g. Butler 2007; Castro et al. 2010; Mansfield et al. 2014). For example, when teachers are able to ask questions, seek support, and observe more experienced teachers, this is a known determinant of their well-being and work commitment (e.g. Castro et al. 2010; De Neve et al. 2015; Mansfield et al. 2014).

3.5 *Responsible Decision-Making*

Responsible decision-making, the final SEC, refers to the capacity to make constructive and respectful choices regarding one's behaviour and social interactions by, for example, considering ethical, safety, social, and well-being concerns for oneself and others (CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015). In teachers' work, this involves responsible decision-making with respect to students, their families, and colleagues; using pedagogy that is respectful to students; and considering the well-being of students and colleagues (e.g. by adjusting activities if students are struggling or if a student is unwell). Evidence of teachers' responsible decision-making is largely recognisable via their actions. In this section, attention is focused on two manifestations of this: the strategies teachers employ to make effective decisions in their work, and their provision of support for students—which may (or may not) reflect responsible and supportive teaching decisions.

Teachers are required to make decisions in their work on a continuous basis (Emmer and Stough 2001). Decision-making is a process through which teachers make judgements and decisions with the aim of optimising students' outcomes (Shavelson and Stern 1981). Decision-making is inherent in all aspects of teachers' work, including classroom management, instructional approaches, timing, or even problem solving issues that arise. In that sense, it is employed before (e.g. planning the order of learning activities to best engage students), during (e.g. adjusting lesson pacing), and after (e.g. planning changes for the next lesson) events occur (Westerman 1991).

Researchers have shown that expert teachers tend to be more effective at decision-making—with respect to classroom management, for example, expert teachers spend significantly greater amounts of time establishing and instructing students on classroom routines and norms than beginning teachers (Emmer and Stough 2001). Researchers have also shown that the types of decision-making approaches utilised by teachers impact teachers' and students' outcomes differently. For example, teachers' use of preventative classroom management strategies (e.g. describing expectations to students before class) rather than reactive strategies (e.g. using rewards and punishments) has been associated with lower teacher stress and increased on-task behaviour by students (Clunies-Ross et al. 2008). Moreover, beginning teachers who are able to employ problem solving strategies—such as trial and error, consulting others, researching alternative solutions—tend to exhibit greater resilience and well-being (e.g. Castro et al. 2010; see also Mansfield et al. 2014).

Turning next to teachers' provision of support, autonomy-supportive teaching and controlling teaching are two contrasting approaches by which teachers can offer support in the classroom. Stemming from self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 2012), autonomy-supportive teaching involves teaching in ways that support students' self-determination and empowerment as learners—such as offering

encouragement and hints to help students solve problems on their own and being responsive to student questioning (Reeve and Jang 2006). In contrast, controlling teaching involves pressuring students into thinking, feeling, and/or acting in certain ways—such as ordering and shaming students, using destructive criticism, or rejecting students’ input (De Meyer et al. 2014). As these definitions suggest, autonomy-supportive teaching involves making constructive and respectful decisions. Researchers have shown that autonomy-supportive teaching is a determinant of more self-determined motivation among students, whereas controlling teaching is predictive of the opposite (e.g. Haerens et al. 2015). Moreover, teachers tend to report lower burnout when they are more autonomy supportive in the classroom (Shen et al. 2015).

3.6 Summarising the Importance of Teachers’ SEC

Taken together, there is a sizeable research literature that has examined constructs relevant to the five SECs identified by CASEL (2013). Moreover, researchers have provided evidence of the relevance of these constructs for teachers’ well-being, motivation, and instructional practices and also for students’ social, emotional, and academic outcomes. Referring back to the conceptual model, therefore, the literature provides support for two of the further premises involving the relationships that teachers’ SEC has with teachers’ and students’ outcomes (premise 1) and teachers’ instructional practices across the curriculum (not only SEL specific; premise 2). In the next section, SEL programming is considered more directly with a focus on how it is relevant to teachers.

4 Relevance of SEL for Teachers

In the bulk of extant literature, SEL has been examined with respect to students. However, considering SEL in relation to teachers is also important. As noted above, teachers are often responsible for implementing SEL in the classroom (Jennings and Frank 2015). Thus, the extent to which teachers feel comfortable teaching SEL or “buy-in” to SEL programmes—that is, their beliefs about SEL—are critical (Collie et al. 2015; Durlak and DuPre 2008; Jennings and Frank 2015). Moreover, SEL programmes may impact teachers—either directly through teacher-focused curriculum/activities or indirectly via teaching SEL to students. Research examining SEL with respect to teachers is largely in its infancy. However, there are important messages emerging. Below, the significance of teachers’ beliefs about SEL is discussed, followed by a discussion of the direct impact that SEL programmes can have on teachers.

4.1 Teachers' Beliefs About SEL

Beliefs are a central influence in teachers' work (Bandura 2001; Gill and Fives 2015). They are intertwined with teachers' practices and experiences at work (Holzberger et al. 2014), and they play a significant role in determining student outcomes (Archambault et al. 2012). With respect to SEL, teachers' beliefs have been found to be centrally implicated in their attitudes towards SEL programmes and their psychological functioning at work. Moreover, teachers' beliefs about SEL appear to influence their implementation of SEL.

Brackett et al. (2012) examined three beliefs about SEL: *SEL comfort*, which refers to teachers' confidence in implementing SEL; *SEL commitment*, which refers to teachers' commitment to improving their skills in the area of SEL; and *SEL culture*, which refers to teachers' perceptions of principal and school support for SEL (Brackett et al. 2012). Brackett and colleagues showed that when teachers hold positive beliefs about an SEL programme, they report enjoying the SEL programme more, greater "buy-in" to the value of the programme, and higher ratings of programme effectiveness. Moreover, they report lower burnout and greater self-efficacy for teaching. Affirming and extending these findings, Collie et al. (2011, 2012, 2015) showed that SEL culture is important for teachers' commitment to their school of employment and experiences of lower stress and that SEL comfort plays a significant role in higher self-efficacy and lower stress. An interesting finding in Collie et al.'s (2012) study was that SEL commitment was linked with heightened teacher stress, but also greater job satisfaction. They explain that while SEL commitment might reflect a desire for professional growth (which is a key determinant of job satisfaction), it also indicates that the teachers lack confidence in their current abilities—which can be stressful.

Researchers have also considered other beliefs. For example, in Zinsser et al. (2014) research, teachers who felt more strongly that SEL is a valuable part of schooling tended to embed SEL more holistically—both through formal learning activities, and also in their general interactions with students by modelling, coaching, and scaffolding SEL. Moreover, beliefs about self-efficacy for teaching in general, teaching SEL specifically, and behaviour management are aligned with outcomes such as greater implementation of SEL content (Ransford et al. 2009), lower burnout, and greater mindfulness (Domitrovich et al. 2016). Taken together, therefore, there is a growing body of literature highlighting the importance of teachers' beliefs about SEL for teachers' attitudes towards SEL programmes, their well-being and motivation, and their SEL instructional practices.

4.2 The Impact of SEL on Teachers

Although the bulk of work considering teachers with respect to SEL has involved examining teachers' beliefs, researchers are also beginning to examine the direct

impact of SEL programmes on teachers. This research tends to fall into two groups: the incidental impacts of student-focused SEL on teachers and the impact of teacher-focused SEL programmes on teachers. Turning first to the incidental teacher-related impacts of student-focused SEL programmes, researchers have shown that increased implementation of SEL programmes by teachers is associated with lower burnout and greater self-efficacy (Han and Weiss 2005; Ransford et al. 2009; Rimm-Kaufmann and Sawyer 2004). Moreover, Rimm-Kaufmann and Sawyer (2004) found that US teachers at schools implementing an SEL programme held more positive attitudes towards teaching and prioritised adaptive teaching practices relative to teachers in schools not implementing the same SEL programme. In an Australian study, Cain and Carnellor (2008) showed that after implementing an SEL programme, teachers described an improvement in relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. In other research, Domitrovich et al. (2016) showed that US teachers' involvement in a comprehensive, student-focused SEL programme was associated with greater inclines in self-efficacy and mindfulness over the course of a school year. Together, the impacts of student-focused SEL on teachers are not surprising, given that teachers are influenced by their work environment (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Collie et al. 2015; Vadeboncoeur and Collie 2013) and given that promoting a supportive and caring environment is a core aim of SEL (Weissberg et al. 2015).

Turning to programmes specifically targeting teachers, promising evidence is emerging. For example, Jennings et al. (2013) examined the influence of mindfulness-based professional development on teachers. The programme involved training in emotional skills (e.g. role plays to help teachers to recognise and be aware of their emotions), mindfulness (e.g. deliberate practice of present moment awareness), and caring and compassion (e.g. mindful listening to others without judgement). The researchers found that teachers who participated in the programme reported greater well-being, lower stress, greater mindfulness, and greater self-efficacy for teaching compared with a control group. In a related study, Roeser et al. (2013) also examined the impact of mindfulness training on teachers. Teachers were asked to complete training on monitoring internal reactions to situations (e.g. knowing when one is in the midst of an emotional reaction and to calm down before responding) and practicing self-compassion (i.e. cultivating an attitude of kindness and compassion towards oneself). Results showed that compared with a control group, teachers in the experimental group exhibited lower stress and burnout post-programme and in a three-month follow-up test.

4.3 Summary

Examinations of SEL with respect to teachers are emerging, and these highlight the importance of teachers' beliefs about SEL, as well as the influence of SEL programmes for teachers' outcomes. Referring back to the conceptual framework, the research discussed above indicates support for two of the premises: Jennings and

Greenberg's (2009) statement of a link between teachers' SEC and effective SEL implementation, and the proposed link that teachers' SEL beliefs have with their well-being, motivation, attitudes about SEL, and implementation practices (premise 3). In the next sections, implications for the key premises are discussed with respect to practice, research, and theory.

5 Practical Implications for Principals and Teachers

The findings from research described in the current chapter suggest several implications for practice. Here, the focus is placed on two such implications: efforts to promote (a) teachers' SEC and (b) teachers' positive beliefs about SEL. These two foci are important because not only do they impact teachers' personal outcomes, they also hold implications for how teachers implement SEL in the classroom.

With respect to the first focus, one approach for promoting teachers' SEC is via teacher-focused professional development (Jennings and Frank 2015). The investigations on mindfulness-based professional development described above have shown that this can be an effective way of promoting teachers' skills relevant to the SECs of self-awareness and self-management (Jennings et al. 2013; Roeser et al. 2013). Approaches for promoting teachers' relationship skills and social awareness have also shown potential (Williford et al. 2015). For example, Pianta et al. (2008) examined the impact of an online professional development programme that involved one-on-one consultation and targeted feedback to individual teachers based on a video-taped segment of teaching from their classroom. The findings showed that teachers who engaged in the consultation and feedback process showed significant increases in teacher–student interaction quality as assessed by independent observers. For the final SEC of responsible decision-making, several researchers have provided evidence that classroom management and autonomy-supportive teaching strategies can be promoted via professional development (e.g. Chatzisarantis and Hagger 2009; Cheon and Reeve 2013; Cheon et al. 2012; Dicke et al. 2015). As one example, Cheon et al. (2012) examined a programme where teachers were taught the value of autonomy-supportive teaching, reflected on their use of autonomy-supportive teaching strategies, and were provided with information about implementing autonomy-supportive strategies. Results showed that the teachers who received this training were rated by trained observers as displaying significantly more autonomy-supportive strategies in their teaching than a control group. Moreover, their students reported significantly greater motivation, engagement, and achievement.

Another potential avenue to promote teachers' SEC concerns principal support. In Collie and Martin's (2017) study introduced above, teachers' adaptability was found to be important for teachers' well-being and, in turn, students' achievement. As noted earlier, adaptability refers to a particular form of self-regulation (of thoughts, behaviours, and emotions) applicable in novel, changing, or uncertain

circumstances. Of relevance to practice, Collie and Martin's study found that principal support (specifically principals' autonomy-supportive leadership) played an important role. More precisely, when teachers felt supported by their principals, they tended to report higher levels of adaptability. Collie and Martin suggest that principal support is, therefore, one avenue for potentially promoting adaptability. Principal support is also important for teachers' motivation, goal setting, and self-efficacy (e.g. Butler 2007; Collie et al., in press; Fernet et al. 2012)—constructs relevant to SEC as described above.

The second implication to be discussed concerns how teachers' positive beliefs about SEL might be promoted. Collie et al. (2015) suggest that high-quality and ongoing professional learning in SEL is important for building teachers' confidence in teaching SEL and their perceptions of the school-wide support for SEL. It is also important for reducing teachers' stress and burnout that can result from implementing educational innovations (e.g. Collie et al. 2016; Van Droogenbroeck et al. 2014), which has ramifications for teacher retention and effectiveness (e.g. Hakanen et al. 2006; Klusmann et al. 2008). Professional development that highlights the student-related outcomes of SEL may also help to promote teachers' "buy-in" to the value of SEL. Of note, such professional development likely has implications for not only teachers' implementation of SEL, but also their own SEC and well-being (e.g. Brackett et al. 2012; Jennings and Frank 2015). Alternative avenues for promoting teachers' positive SEL beliefs involve making SEL a priority in schools—principal support plays a key role in this, as does professional development—and acknowledging barriers to SEL implementation (e.g. time and funding limitations; Oberle et al. 2016). Given that teachers' beliefs drive their actions (Gill and Fives 2015), these implications may have carry-on effects to effective SEL implementation.

6 Implications for Research and Theory

There is clearly emerging interest on the topics of teachers' SEC and the teacher-related outcomes of SEL. Nonetheless, more work is needed. In particular, research that extends current knowledge on the role that teachers' SEL beliefs play in impacting their SEL practices (e.g. Durlak and DuPre 2008), along with work examining the link between teachers' SEC and effective teaching will help to affirm the value of attending to teachers' social and emotional experiences in teaching. Although studies are emerging where teacher-focused SEL programmes and interventions are examined (e.g. Jennings et al. 2013; Roeser et al. 2013; Spilt et al. 2012), further research is important. Moreover, efforts by researchers and programme developers to consider the impact of SEL curriculum on teachers are a necessary development as the field advances (Collie et al. 2012, 2016).

Turning to theory and as discussed at the beginning of the chapter, Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) model was applied as a relevant conceptual framework. Several additional premises to those described in the model were discussed: teachers' SEC

is important for teachers' and students' outcomes (premise 1); teachers' SEC is relevant to teachers' broader instructional practices (not only their effective SEL implementation; premise 2); and teachers' beliefs about SEL are an important determinant of their well-being, motivation, attitudes towards SEL, and implementation of SEL (premise 3). The research described in this chapter offers support for the three premises as well as the original relationship between teachers' SEC and effective SEL implementation as suggested by Jennings and Greenberg. Thus, the current chapter has provided understanding that helps to extend conceptual knowledge of SEL by proposing and supporting additional relationships between teachers' SEC, their beliefs about SEL, their instructional practices, and students' and teachers' outcomes. Such understanding is important for informing future research, theory, and practice.

7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to consider the relevance of SEC and SEL for teachers. To do this, a conceptual framework based on Jennings and Greenberg (2009) was introduced. Along with several additional premises, the framework presented a model of links between teachers' SEC, their experiences of SEL programmes, and outcomes for teachers and students. Following this, research involving constructs relevant to the five SECs described by CASEL (2013) was reviewed. From this, it is clear that when teachers have greater SEC, they tend to experience greater well-being and motivation, implement SEL more effectively, and promote positive academic, social, and emotional outcomes among their students. Next, the relevance of SEL for teachers was discussed. The cited studies indicated that teachers' beliefs about SEL and their involvement in student-focused and teacher-focused SEL programmes can play an important role in influencing teachers' SEC, psychological functioning, and instructional practices. In sum, teachers' SEC and the impact of SEL programmes on teachers are areas worth considering given their clear links to teachers' and students' outcomes, implementation effectiveness, and for the promotion of positive outcomes throughout schooling systems.

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Part II
Perspectives and Approaches in the
Asia-Pacific

Social and Emotional Learning in Singapore's Schools: Framework, Practice, Research, and Future Directions

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Khairyani Kamarolzaman and Elaine Yu Ling Cai

Abstract Education in Singapore strives to foster the holistic development of its youth. To attain this goal, social and emotional learning (SEL) has been an integral part of the academic curricula at the different levels of schooling. The SEL Framework, which was formally introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2005 (see Ministry of Education 2008) and then further formulated to be the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014), provides an organizing structure to conceptualize, design, implement, evaluate, and refine school-based programs seeking to facilitate the development of social and emotional competencies (SECs) of Singaporean youth. Although the five key SECs emphasized in the Framework (Ministry of Education 2008; Ministry of Education 2014) are aligned with those in the widely adopted prototypical model of SECs formulated by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the Framework differs in its emphasis on the cultivation of core moral values (respect, responsibility, integrity, care, resilience, and harmony) as guiding principles for the application of SECs. The SECs under the Framework are also the basis of the broader twenty first century skills and competencies (civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills, critical and inventive thinking, and communication, collaboration and information skills). Importantly, the Framework also takes the view that the promotion of SECs in

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E. Frydenberg, A.J. Martin and R.J. Collie (eds.), *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3394-0_10

schools is part of the concerted effort in attaining desired outcomes of education: nurturing young Singaporeans who are confident, self-directed in learning, actively contributing to collective efforts, and concerned about the well-being of others, community, and society. The present chapter not only examines key components of the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014), it also discusses its pedagogical principles and approaches to school-wide implementation of SEL. Recent SEL studies in Singapore are reviewed, and future directions for SEL application and research in Singapore are proposed.

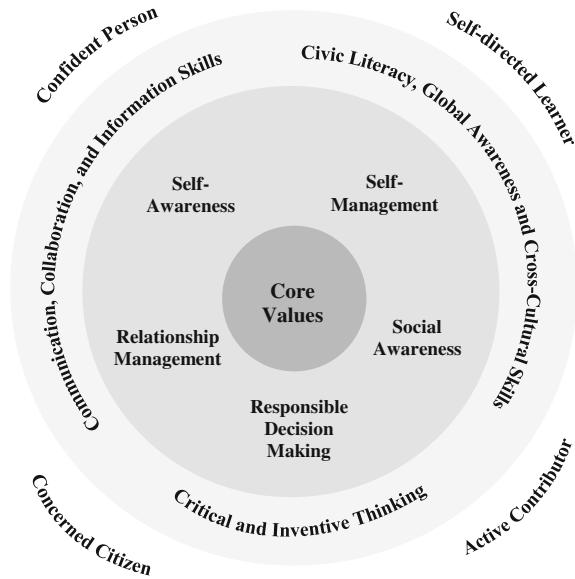
Keywords Social and emotional competencies · Social and emotional learning · Moral values · Twenty first century competencies · Singapore

“We need to develop our children holistically, in all aspects—moral, cognitive, physical, social, and esthetic, or what is termed in Chinese as 德智体群美 (*de zhi ti qun mei*), and between academic achievement and values, it must not be ‘either/or’. We should strive to achieve both” (Heng 2011). This statement was one of the key nation-wide educational missions highlighted by Singapore’s Minister for Education (MOE), Mr. Heng Swee Keat, in his address at the 2011 MOE Work Plan Seminar. The mission was reiterated in his 2012 speech, “It is not cognitive skills alone, but character traits of empathy, graciousness, responsibility, and integrity that will enable our kids to succeed” (Heng 2012). With this educational spirit in mind, social and emotional learning (SEL) has been at the heart of Singapore’s education system since the SEL Framework was first introduced in 2005 (see Ministry of Education 2008). The SEL Framework (Ministry of Education 2008), or its expanded formulation, the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014; see Fig. 1), was formally established with the aim to provide an organizing structure to conceptualize, design, implement, evaluate, and refine school-based programs seeking to facilitate the social and emotional development of Singaporean youth. The present chapter examines the Framework and its recommended pedagogical approaches and principles, reviews recent SEL studies in Singapore, and proposes future directions for SEL application and research in Singapore.

1 The Social and Emotional Learning Framework

In Singapore’s education system, SEL has been an integral part of Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) with the goal “to inculcate values and build competencies in our students to develop them to be good individuals and useful citizens” (Ministry of Education 2012). With particular reference to the SEL conceptualization by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, www.casel.org; see also Weissberg et al. 2015), the SEL Framework

Fig. 1 Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014)—Reprinted with permission



defines SEL as, “the acquisition of skills needed to recognize and manage emotions, develop care and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively” (Ministry of Education 2008, p. 1). The SEL Framework (Ministry of Education 2008), which has been used as the guidelines to facilitate the development of Singaporean students’ social and emotional competencies (SECs), was formulated by the MOE by conducting international reviews of best SEL practices in 20 countries (e.g., Australia, China, Korea, the USA, the UK) across 26 programs and 20 frameworks and by studying various theories of social and emotional development. Three SEL centers of international standing (the CASEL in Chicago, the Center for Social and Emotional Education in New York, and the Welsh Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority in the UK) were also visited and consulted. In addition, a series of workshops involving school leaders and teachers from 42 schools in Singapore, MOE specialists, National Institute of Education (NIE) teacher educators, parents, and employers were conducted to seek their perspectives about SEL and SECs (see Ministry of Education 2008).

The SEL Framework (Ministry of Education 2008) was subsequently expanded to be the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014). The Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes views SECs as the foundations of the twenty first century competencies that are important to prepare young Singaporeans to flourish in a world characterized by rapid globalization, technological advancements, and changing demographics. As shown in the center circle in Fig. 1, the Framework focuses on inter-related cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that

can be subsumed into five core SEC domains: *self-awareness* (i.e., the ability to recognize one's emotions and thoughts, to identify one's strengths, needs, and values), *self-management* (i.e., the ability to monitor and regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and impulses, to coordinate personal resources to achieve desirable goals), *social awareness* (i.e., the ability to be in somebody else's shoes, to empathize, to recognize and respect similarities and differences between one's perspectives and those of others), *relationship management* (i.e., the ability to maintain positive social relationships through effective communication, negotiation, and cooperation; to seek and provide help), and *responsible decision making* (i.e., the ability to identify problems, to evaluate the situations and make decisions based on moral and ethical considerations). In this regard, the five SECs in the Framework are identical with the key SECs identified by the CASEL, which have also characterized many of the SEL frameworks worldwide.

However, the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014) in Fig. 1 differs from the SEL model formulated by the CASEL in three ways. The first difference lies in the addition of "core values" at the center of the Framework. That is, although the Framework takes the position that SECs are neutral and amoral (i.e., neither good nor bad), it posits that the SEC skills can be used for good or bad purposes (Ministry of Education 2008, 2012, 2014). For example, a student who has good social awareness is able to identify his/her friends who are in need of help. This provides the student an opportunity to either help or exploit the situation. It is for this reason that core values are represented in the innermost circle in the Framework (see Fig. 1). This is to underscore that the teaching and application of SECs should be grounded and rooted in sound values (Ministry of Education 2008, 2012, 2014). While recognizing many different values guiding people's behaviors, the six regarded by the MOE as core values are *respect* (i.e., the importance of respecting oneself and others based on one's and others' intrinsic worth), *responsibility* (i.e., the importance of recognizing that one has duties to oneself, family, community, nation, and the world, and of fulfilling these duties), *integrity* (i.e., the importance of upholding ethical and moral principles and acting in accordance with these principles), *care* (i.e., the importance of acting with kindness and compassion), *resilience* (i.e., the importance of developing psychological toughness, optimism, adaptability, and resourcefulness when facing life challenges), and *harmony* (i.e., the importance of inner happiness and maintaining social cohesion and at the same time respecting and appreciating the diversity of a multicultural society).

The Framework considers core values as the "why" of behaviors which provides the reason and goal for the behaviors, whereas SECs are the "how" of behaviors which serve as the skills and concrete actions to display the behaviors (Ministry of Education 2008, 2014). For example, in order to be appreciative and respectful toward individual differences (i.e., valuing harmony), one needs to be empathetic and to know that others may have different perspectives (i.e., having social awareness). Or, in order to be buoyant in facing life challenges (i.e., valuing resilience), one has to be able to recognize his/her own strengths, regulate his/her thoughts and emotions, negotiate challenges, and seek help from others when necessary (i.e., having

self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making skills). Thus, unlike the SEL model developed by the CASEL which defines SECs as desirable social and emotional abilities or skills that young people are expected to acquire, develop, and apply in daily lives, the Framework considers that the acquisition and development of SECs should also be for “good” causes and guided by values—especially those recognized to be important or “core” for people living in a multi-cultural society like Singapore.

The second difference lies in the functional emphasis of SECs in underpinning key twenty first century competencies; that is, a set of competencies considered to be fundamentally important for thriving in the present fast-changing and globalized world (Ministry of Education 2008, 2012, 2014). Represented in the outer circle of the Framework, these twenty first century competencies include *civic literacy*, *global awareness*, and *cross-cultural skills*, which all refer to the capacity to contribute to society and to work with people who come from diverse cultural backgrounds and bring different perspectives; *critical and inventive thinking*, which refer to the capacity to think critically and out of the box and to challenge oneself to pursue and attain something at a greater height; and *communication, collaboration, and information skills*, which refer to the capacity to find and select information and to effectively communicate one's ideas and work together with others (Ministry of Education 2008, 2012, 2014). Each of these sets of competencies, according to the Framework, is underpinned by the individual's SECs. To illustrate, to collaborate effectively with others, including people of different cultures or nationalities, one requires the capacity to recognize the dynamic moment-to-moment states of others' emotions and the differences in perspectives about a certain issue that others may adopt (i.e., having social awareness skills), besides the ability to maintain positive social interactions, to communicate, and to solve conflicts when they arise (i.e., having relationship management skills). The inclusion of the twenty first century competencies in the Framework appears to demonstrate the high importance of nurturing a generation of young Singaporeans who are competitive and relevant to today's world.

Further, the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014) also states that the focus on nurturing the SECs and the twenty first century competencies anchored in core values represents the building blocks that lead to the development of personal qualities encapsulated in the Desired Outcomes of Education or DOEs (Ministry of Education 2009, 2014). This is a third difference between the Framework and the SEC model articulated by the CASEL. The four DOEs (Ministry of Education 2014), upon the completion of formal education, are:

- a **confident person** who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgment, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively;
- a **self-directed learner** who takes responsibility for his/her own learning, who questions, reflects, and perseveres in the pursuit of learning;

- an **active contributor** who is able to work effectively in teams, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks, is innovative and strives for excellence; and
- a **concerned citizen** who is committed to Singapore, has a strong civic consciousness, is informed, and takes an active role in bettering the lives of others.

From the Framework, it is clear that the implementation of SEL in Singapore's schools (with the aim to nurture Singaporean young people's SECs, grounded in core values) is well aligned with the goals of the nation's formal education in developing individuals who are confident and able to learn independently and actively contribute to the lives of others, the community, and the society. These dynamic links among key individual attributes surrounding SECs are shown in Fig. 1, the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014).

2 Applied Recommendations in the Framework

The facilitation of SEL emphasizes the importance of supportive school culture, or "school culture of care," which is fundamentally underpinned by teacher–student relationship and role modeling (Ministry of Education 2008, 2016). To support schools in achieving the desired outcomes of SEL, the MOE has developed a multi-pronged implementation plan. As elaborated by Kom (2011), the multi-pronged plan consists of four key approaches including *prototyping* (i.e., a systematic process that requires schools to develop innovatively customized programmes to nurture their students' SECs), *training* (i.e., a concerted effort to equip pre-service and in-service teachers with the knowledge and skills to promote SECs in their students), *curriculum* (i.e., developing syllabi and strategies to explicitly teach SECs, to infuse SEL into formal academic subjects such as English and Mother Tongue and informal school-based programmes such as co-curricular activities, and to harness teachable moments), and *evaluation* (i.e., developing a framework and tools to help schools to identify their needs and assess the extent to which they have attained SEL-desired outcomes).

To evaluate the effectiveness of school-based SEL, the MOE formally outlines the goals, standards, and benchmarks of SEL (Ministry of Education 2008). Not only do SEL goals, standards, and benchmarks provide explicit learning outcomes that school-based SEL initiatives and interventions are expected to attain, they also serve to guide and inform the design and evaluation of SEL programs. More precisely, the SEL goals provide the overarching purposes that SEL programs and processes are expected to achieve and the rationale for why these purposes are considered important. The SEL standards represent the general desired outcomes concerning social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes that learners will be able to perform, know, and possess. The SEL benchmarks refer to developmentally specific target SECs that learners at the different levels of education are to achieve (Ministry of Education 2008). For example, the SEL goal of "developing

self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve personal well-being” has “identifying one’s emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and values, and understanding how these influence one’s actions and behaviors” as one of its statements of standard. This standard is further divided into “recognizing and labeling one’s emotions and identifying contributing factors to one’s emotions” and “understanding the relationship between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors” as two key benchmarks that the SEL process aims to achieve at the lower and upper primary school levels, respectively (Ministry of Education 2008).

Further, the MOE identifies eight approaches to the school-wide implementation of SEL. These approaches, which are regarded to be culturally and systemically appropriate to develop the SECs of young people in Singapore’s schools, include:

1. *Supportive learning and school environment.* This approach underscores the importance of role modeling by all the school personnel (school leaders, teachers, and administrative staff) who are expected to show warm, supportive, and respectful relationships among each other and with students.
2. *Partnership with parents and the community.* This approach involves parents and the community to nurture SECs in the youth. This can be done through platforms such as teacher–parent meetings, workshops for parents, and differentiated programs for students by community agencies.
3. *Specific curricula for SEL.* This approach refers to special school programs that can be used as platforms to directly cultivate SECs in the youth, such as Life Skills, Educational and Career Guidance, and Human Sexuality Education.
4. *Infusion of SEL into the existing academic curriculum.* This approach infuses SEL into the formal academic curriculum particularly through topics that lend themselves to the cultivation of SECs (e.g., English Language and Literature, Civics and Moral Education, Instructional Program).
5. *Pedagogical approaches that require students to apply SECs.* This approach harnesses instructional practices to foster SECs, such as group work, cooperative learning, and buddy system.
6. *Informal curriculum.* This approach refers to specific school programs such as co-curricular activities, peer mediation, conflict management, and student leadership programs that provide opportunities for students to practice their SECs.
7. *Experiential learning.* This approach emphasizes the acquisition of SECs in applied settings by exposing students to real-life challenges (e.g., school camps, community involvement programs).
8. *Teachable moments.* This approach refers to unplanned and authentic opportunities during classroom lessons which can be used by teachers to foster SECs and to communicate important learning points.

In addition to these eight main approaches, the Framework recommends five pedagogical principles (5PPs) that can be used to guide teachers in planning and conducting SEL-focused lessons in their specific subject areas. The 5PPs for SEL include the following:

1. *Providing for the Social Dimension.* This principle underscores the need to provide opportunities for students to interact with the teacher, to observe appropriate social behaviors, and to interact with each other to practice the social skills they learn.
2. *Providing for the Emotional Dimension.* This principle highlights the importance of creating a safe and supportive learning environment to help students connect with their own feelings and be willing to express these feelings.
3. *Reflection.* This principle focuses on the value of providing opportunities for students to think and ponder about their social and emotional experiences and to internalize and construct personal meaning in what they learn.
4. *Relevance.* This principle centers on the need to provide choice of materials and activities that help students to understand, remember, and transfer what they learn during the SEL process.
5. *Action.* This principle refers to the importance of providing opportunities for students to put into practice what they learn during SEL.

As elucidated earlier, the SEL Framework outlines practical recommendations for effective SEL implementation. Although it is apparent that the SEL Framework is systemically adapted from existing SEL prototypes for use in Singapore and the recommendations seem to be deeply grounded in theories of social and emotional development, the articulation of the theory-practice links in the SEL Framework is relatively limited. This may be because the model and recommendations are mainly developed and offered for school leaders and teachers as practitioners. Whenever the theory-practice links are explicitly stated, they refer to classic developmental and motivational theories. For example, the key developmental theories referenced to support the explicit teaching of SECs during the Form Teacher Guidance Period (FTGP) include those by Maslow, Erikson, Selman, and Piaget (see also Ministry of Education 2012).

With reference to Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs model (which assumes that lower-order physiological, safety, belonging, and love needs must be met before satisfying self-esteem and self-actualization needs), pedagogy should first pay attention to the fulfillment of lower-order needs as a preliminary basis for nurturing students' self-awareness and, in turn, fostering their self-esteem, self-concept, and self-efficacy. This can be done by teachers, for example, by creating a learning environment that is consistently supportive, warm, and safe such that the students are more ready to learn. As posited by Selman (1971), the theoretical idea that children's role-taking perspective ability developmentally progresses (from one that is ego-centric and self-focused to one that is more neutral, social, and societal) guides the design of SEL activities that aim to prepare the students to acquire developmentally more sophisticated perspectives than those that the students have already possessed or adopted to view social issues. This can be done, for example, by asking questions that scaffold the students to see an issue from various angles that are beyond the lens they already use to view the issue. Similarly, Piaget's (1954) theory of cognitive development (which assumes that children's cognitive capacity develops from concrete thinking to abstract and hypothetical thinking) informs the choice of SEL activities

such that they are appropriately aligned with the developmental stages of the students. For instance, it is developmentally more appropriate to design and implement SEL activities that require students at the lower primary school levels (grade-1 and grade-2) to recognize their own basic emotions through concrete experiences; ask students at the middle primary school levels (grade-3 and grade-4) to recognize multiple and more complex emotions that they and others feel; and expect students at the upper primary school level (grade-5 and grade-6) to predict (or hypothesize) and weigh the upsides and downsides of what would happen when they make a decision on a given social issue. Lastly, alluding to Erikson's (1968) model of individual development (which theorizes the psychosocial needs to develop a sense of competence, industry, and a clear sense of identity during the primary and secondary school years), SEL practices should aim at cultivating effective learning skills, attitudes, and capacity to manage emotions (e.g., loss, disappointment, anxiety) associated with learning expectations and roles. This can be done, for example, by asking the students to play different roles in group activities (e.g., leader, secretary, time keeper, member), coaching them conflict management skills to resolve issues that may arise during group projects, or helping them to identify the roots of poor performance and concrete ways, such as study strategies and time management, to remedy it.

3 SEL Research in Singapore

Formal research on SEL in Singapore is now unfolding. Three lines of research have emerged: (a) research on the effectiveness of SEL programs, (b) research on the development of SEC assessment scales and methods, and (c) research on SEL implementation in classroom teaching. Key relevant studies are reviewed below.

Research on the effectiveness of SEL programs. In a study seeking to investigate the effectiveness of an 8-week Outdoor Education (OE) program in fostering SECs, Abdul Rahman (2009) assigned 40 secondary-3 (grade-9) students of different ability streams into experimental and control groups. All secondary students in Singapore were placed into either a higher-ability, middle-ability, or lower-ability stream based on their Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) results (see Liem et al. 2013). Students in the control group underwent the regular OE program consisting of four lessons of rock-climbing and four lessons of orienteering and focusing on achievements. Students in the experimental group underwent the OE.SEL@ZSS program specially designed to enhance SECs. Not only did the OE.SEL@ZSS consist of the four lessons of rock-climbing (similar to those in the control group), it also equipped students with safety skills and required them to work as a team, to be responsible for their peers' safety, and to trust each other. During the process, the students were facilitated to build their self-awareness and self-management competencies as well as social awareness and relationship management skills. In addition, they had to constantly make informed and responsible decisions that would not only affect their personal well-being but also their relationships with peers and teachers. Efforts were made to conduct the OE.SEL@ZSS

program using the 5PPs recommended in the SEL Framework (Ministry of Education 2008). A 28-item questionnaire measuring the five domains of SEC was administered to all the participants twice, before, and after the program. The results showed a consistent pattern that students in the experimental group reported significant and more sizable increases than those in the control group on all SEC domains. Among students in the experimental group, however, the higher-ability students showed larger gains through the program compared to their lower-ability peers. Also, male students reported larger gains than their female peers. These findings point to the need to take into consideration the academic ability and gender of the prospective participants when designing SEL programs because there could be ability- and gender-related differences in SEL developmental advancement that may impact the effectiveness of the programs.

In a mixed-method study that examined the impact of a two-day, one-night SEL camp, themed “*Glow! Grow! Go!*”, Ee and Ong (2014) administered the Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ, Zhou and Ee 2012) to 93 secondary-2 (grade-8) students at pre-camp and immediately after the last camp activity. The camp was designed to provide a safe environment for the participants to work in a group, to freely express themselves, and to develop their self-worth, management and communication skills, responsibility, and decision-making skills. Activities during the camp included *Problem-Solving Station Games*, *Push Ball Challenge*, *Low Element Challenge Circuit*, *Rock Wall*, *Water Rafting*, *Outdoor Cooking*, and *Night Walk*. Each participant was given a camp handbook in which he or she was required to write a reflection upon each activity using the following guiding questions, “What did I learn about myself? What did I notice about the relationships between my friends and I, and among my friends? What were the good/bad feelings, if any? What did I learn about responding to situations? What would I do differently? What are the two or three words that I can use to describe how I felt about this activity?” Teacher facilitators were each given an observation checklist to rate the individual students’ behaviors in different situations during the camp on each of the five SEC domains.

The findings indicated that the students reported significant and sizable improvements in all the five SEC scores after the camp, with self-awareness and relationship management being two domains of SEC showing the largest gains. Analysis of the students’ reflection entries substantiated the quantitative findings, indicating that 49% of the students reported a greater sense of self-awareness, 26% reported a greater sense of relationship management, and between 4 and 16% reported a greater sense of competency in the other three SEC domains. Among the camp activities, the *Night Walk* activity was found to generate the highest gains of self-awareness (60%) and self-management skills (22%), whereas the *Problem-Solving Station Games* was seen by the students as honing their relationship management skills (40%). These findings may not be too surprising because *Night Walk* was the only activity that involved individual participation in which students had to navigate their way in the dark and face uncertain situations, requiring them to manage fear and anxiety. *Problem-Solving Station Games* was an activity that

consisted of different puzzles designed to facilitate the students to learn about themselves and how they functioned as a group. In this activity, the students were expected to consider different strengths, limitations, and unique skills of each group member and to share their ideas to attain the collective goals of solving the puzzles. Thus, the development of SECs through activities like those in the “*Glow! Grow! Go!*” program appears to be associated with the nature of the activities that the students are expected to do or experience during the program.

Some of the students' verbatim responses associated with self-awareness, self-management, and relationship management skills included, “*I learnt that I have confidence. I was scared at first but I built up my confidence during the Night Walk*” (self-awareness), “*If I see something not normal, I will keep calm and keep walking*” (self-management), and “*We can communicate well if we accept other people's ideas and not to do something selfish like stubbornly support our own ideas*” (relationship management). The teachers' ratings, however, showed a different pattern. Although the students were observed by the teachers as displaying a fair amount of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making skills, their relationship management skills were observed to be the lowest. This discrepancy, according to Ee and Ong (2014), may indicate that “teachers tend to see more overt actions rather than examining students' thoughts and reflections as well” (p. 38). Taken together, while the study exemplifies an SEL-focused program that effectively brought about positive changes in students' SECs, it also points to the need to consider different sources of information, including from parents and peers, in assessing the growth of students' SECs.

Research on the development of SEC assessment scales and methods. In a measurement study, Zhou and Ee (2012) developed an instrument measuring Singaporean students' SECs in the five domains. Targeting one primary school and three secondary school samples, they developed the Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ) comprising 25 items, with each SEC domain measured by five items. Sample items included: “I know what I am thinking and doing” (self-awareness), “I recognize how people feel by looking at their facial expressions” (social awareness), “I can stay calm in stressful situations” (self-management), “I will always apologize when I hurt my friend unintentionally” (relationship management), and “When making decisions, I take into account the consequence of my actions” (responsible decision making). The five SEC subscales were found to be significantly correlated with objective performance scores in English, mathematics, and science. However, confirmatory factor analyses showed marginal fit indices and the internal consistency reliability of most of the subscales was below 70s for the primary school sample (though, it was around 70s for the secondary school samples). The study thus provided preliminary progress in generating a valid and reliable self-report measure of SECs among children and adolescents in Singapore.

In a novel qualitative study assessing SECs, Ee (2014) employed a scenario-based instrument adapted from the Defining Issue Test (DIT) paradigm (Rest 1979) to assess 802 secondary-1 (grade-7) and secondary-2 (grade-8)

students' competencies in the five SE domains. The DIT was initially used as an alternative to Kohlberg's semi-structured interviews to understand adolescents' and adults' moral reasoning (see Colby and Kohlberg 1987). The DIT used Rest's (1979) four-step model for ethical decision making: (1) recognize an ethical dilemma, (2) evaluate the alternatives, (3) make a decision, and (4) act on the decision. In this study, a scenario about a boy named Bill obsessively playing computer games and having to prepare for exams was presented in a printed form, with spaces provided for the students to write their responses to each of the five guiding open-ended question: (1) "What can you learn from this scenario?", (2) "What do you think are the consequences of Bill's actions?", (3) "How can Bill control his obsession with the Internet?", (4) "What effect will Bill's obsession have on himself, his parents, and his future?", and (5) "What would you do if you were Bill? Why?" Content analysis showed that the students' responses to the different questions can be classified into one of the five SEC domains (except relationship management because the scenario was not related to relationship issues). Analysis indicated that responses to the second and fourth questions could be classified into social awareness, responses to the third question could be classified into self-management, and responses to the first and fifth questions could be classified into responsible decision making, self-awareness, and social awareness. The DIT thus appears to be another promising approach to assessing and better understanding students' SECs.

Research on SEL implementation in classroom teaching. Other studies have focused on the role of the teachers in infusing SEL in their curriculum instruction. In one such study, Ee and Quek (2013) conducted semi-structured interviews with 19 teachers of English, Mathematics, Science, and Character Education. These teachers were asked questions probing their perceptions of SEL and its importance for students, the indicators of socially and emotionally competent and incompetent students, the infusion of SEL in lessons, and the factors that hinder the success of SEL programs. Analysis of the responses showed that more than half of the respondents believed that SEL is important for providing holistic education to students. The teachers interviewed also stated that students with high SEC are those who are: able to manage themselves (e.g., "less impulsive," "better disciplined," "more able to control their temper"), socially aware (e.g., "able to take the perspective of others," "more empathetic"), responsible in making decisions (e.g., "think twice before making decisions"), and able to manage their relationships (e.g., "deal with disputes maturely"). One third of the teachers believed that their role in effective SEL promotion is as a facilitator (e.g., "Facilitator. It is not like I am telling or prescribing this is the way you should behave, this is the right thing to do. But rather, it should be a process by which they learn and then they understand. Then, they do it") or a role model (e.g., "Nurturer, role model, cheerer for students, support. Somebody they can go to for help, a surrogate parent"). While half of the teachers felt confident in infusing SEL into their lessons (e.g., "Confident that they are able to relate to me and understand why I am saying it. It is about communicating with them beyond academics"), a quarter of them were more circumspect (e.g., "As a whole I am not sure as I have not tried it yet, but if it is a little at a time I

think it is possible”). Half of the interviewees identified English as the easiest subject in which to infuse SEL, followed by Character Education, Mother Tongue, History, Geography, and Social Studies. On the other hand, Mathematics and Science were deemed the most difficult subjects in which to infuse SEL. The teachers also reported the lack of available time for infusing SEL into the lesson, the difficulty in linking the content subjects to SEL, the time needed for preparing SEL-infused lessons, and the (un)availability of suitable supportive resources as key factors hindering their SEL infusion. Taken together, this study identified teachers' perceptions of the relevance of SEL to education and for the students' holistic development, their perceptions of key indicators of socially and emotionally competent students and of challenges in infusing SEL into their teaching. As such, there is a need for systematic training and continuous support for teachers to equip them with pedagogical knowledge and strategies to promote SEL into their teaching of specific curriculum content areas.

In a follow-up study on SEL in classroom teaching, Ee et al. (2014) analyzed 29 videotaped lessons of 15 primary school teachers and 47 videotaped lessons of 26 secondary school teachers. The study sought to examine the pedagogical strategies that teachers employed to infuse SEL into their daily teaching, the differences in use of these strategies across grade levels and subject areas, and the contributing factors to successful SEL in daily teaching. Results demonstrated that the teachers used a variety of strategies to foster SECs, including class discussion stimulated by news reports, videos, or movie clips, role plays, scenario-writing, reflection, logs, animation, debates, storyboards, case studies, short stories, pictures, and analogies. The results reflected a similar pattern across primary and secondary levels: Teachers tended to generate more questions and discussion pertinent to self-awareness, followed by social awareness, responsible decision making, relationship management, and self-management. Teachers believed that self-awareness was the easiest, and relationship and self-management were the most difficult, to structure questions and facilitate discussions. The findings also showed that, in general, most teachers attempted to infuse SEL into their lessons, regardless of the subject areas they taught. Character Education, however, was found to be the subject with the highest number of SEL questions in lessons—this was true for both primary and secondary levels. Mathematics, English, and Science were found to be the subjects with the next highest numbers of SEL questions raised in the primary school classrooms; English, Science, and Mathematics were the subjects with the next highest numbers of SEL questions raised in the secondary classrooms.

Analysis of the videotaped lessons also showed a variety of factors that contributed to the quality and quantity of SEL promotion. These factors can be classified into four themes: (1) *teacher–student relationships*, suggesting the importance of good rapport between the teacher and the students for effective SEL, (2) *classroom climate*, pointing to the need to create a positive and conducive learning environment where students feel free and comfortable to express their thoughts and emotions without a fear of being judged, (3) *classroom management skills*, referring to the teacher's ability to manage the class in terms of noise level and behaviors that are important before quality SEL-related discussions occur, and

(4) *general teaching competencies*, representing the possession of a wide range of pedagogical practices and activities that lend themselves to SEL, such as cooperative learning or project-oriented learning. Based on these findings, Ee and colleagues identified two needs to address various barriers to SEL in daily teaching. First, staff development programs need to facilitate teachers' positive attitudes toward SEC development in students and the realization that teachers' SECs are closely associated with their students' SECs. Second, there is value in building a professional learning community, both at the school and district levels, to provide a platform for school leaders, heads of department, subject heads, and senior teachers to share their resources with more junior colleagues. This is especially important given the limitations in time and resources available for SEL in a busy curriculum that some teachers identified in interviews.

4 Recommendations for Future Research and Applied Implications

The chapter has outlined the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014) formulated by the Singapore MOE and now adopted in schools in Singapore. It has also identified SEL pedagogical principles and practical approaches and discussed a number of Singapore-based studies pertinent to SEL (Ministry of Education 2008). Taking policy, research, and practice together, we propose a number of recommendations to further progress SEL in Singapore.

The SEL Framework (Ministry of Education 2008) or its expanded version, the Framework for Twenty First Century Competencies and Student Outcomes (Ministry of Education 2014) has been very systematic and comprehensive in its conceptualization of SEL, its articulation of target SEL goals, standards, and benchmarks, and its recommendations on SEL pedagogical practices. Brackett et al. (2015, p. 21) stated "approaches to SEL that are applied in schools need to specify which variables impact children's development—from what teachers teach and how they teach it, to how and what children learn, to how various environmental factors affect both teachers and children." That is, to develop SEL programs that are of high quality, approaches must be "based on sound theories of child development, learning, prevention science, and empirically validated practices" (Zins et al. 2004, p. 10). Insofar as this is the case, the theoretical rationale of recommended SEL practices needs to be more explicitly communicated to teachers during professional development as well as clearly stated in accompanying training documents. Doing so, the application of SEL pedagogical principles and approaches is expected to be clearer and more targeted. Following from this, the objectives of instructional activities aimed at promoting SEL can be met more effectively.

Teachers play a crucial role in determining the extent to which the curriculum-based promotion of SEL and school-wide infusion of SEL are effectively implemented. To continuously empower teachers in their capacity as SEL facilitators, there needs to be programmatic theory- and research-grounded trainings that aim to foster teachers' competencies in not only the skills and knowledge about SEL but also the mindset and attitudes toward SEL. Indeed, Jennings and Greenberg's (2009) prosocial classroom model might be used as an integrative framework for teacher professional development programs. This model highlights the importance of teachers' SECs and well-being, and how these teacher factors affect their students' social, emotional, and academic development through positive teacher–student relationships, competent student and classroom management, and effective implementation of SEL programs. These facilitating factors are consistent with the local findings by Ee et al. (2014) who found that good teacher–student rapport, classroom management skills, supportive classroom climate, and general teaching competencies were key factors that contributed to the quality and quantity of SEL in the classrooms. Indeed, Chong and Lee (2015) also suggested that SEL engagement may be enhanced through meaningful teacher–student relationships. Further, as suggested by Jennings and Greenberg, the effectiveness of teacher training programs—such as one seeking to foster teachers' SECs and well-being—needs to be empirically evaluated through randomized controlled experimental designs with a variety of outcomes, derived from both teachers and students.

A recent meta-analysis identified the benefits of SEL-based curricula and programs for a variety of adaptive outcomes, including more positive student attitudes (e.g., stronger academic motivation and self-efficacy, higher educational aspirations, better coping with school stressors), behaviors (e.g., more prosocial behaviors, heightened school attendance, less school absences and suspensions, decline in fights and disruptions), more critical thinking skills, and better academic performance (Durlak et al. 2011). These findings were based on research mostly conducted in the North American context, and so there is a need to establish a similar evidence base in Singapore (Abdul Rahman 2009; Ee and Ong 2014).

Given the somewhat collectivistic nature of Singaporean society, there may also be value in studying socio-contextual antecedents of students' SECs. Research along these lines might investigate socio-contextual factors, such as the role of the community, parents, peers, and teachers, in fostering or hindering the optimal development of students' SECs. To this end, the bio-ecological theory of individual development and well-being (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998) would be of particular relevance and could be used to guide this line of research. To empower SEL research in Singapore, there is also a pressing need to develop a standardized measure of SECs with strong psychometric properties that can be applied on a large-scale basis across primary and secondary school students. The SCEQ developed by Zhou and Ee (2012) represents an important first step; however, there is now a need to continue their efforts in order to generate a valid and reliable SEC measure for school students at different developmental stages. Importantly, as with any educational research program, the success of SEL research in Singapore will

not take place without a strong partnership between the Ministry of Education, school personnel, and university researchers. Cooperation and collaboration between these stakeholders will play a critical role in bringing SEL practice and research in Singapore to new and greater heights.

Acknowledgements The authors wish to thank colleagues from the Student Development Curriculum Division and the Curriculum Policy Office of the Ministry of Education, Singapore, for their permission to present the materials in this chapter and for their valuable inputs on the chapter. Any opinions and conclusions expressed in this chapter are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of Ministry of Education. Requests for further information about this chapter can be addressed to Gregory Arief D. Liem, Psychological Studies Academic Group, National Institute of Education, Singapore 637616.

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Social and Emotional Learning in China: Theory, Research, and Practice

Kai Yu and Zhen Jiang

Abstract Research, practice, and policy interest in social and emotional learning (SEL) has increased in China over the past ten years. This chapter defines SEL as instructional efforts and systemic interventions that engage students, educators, parents and communities to promote safe, supportive, and optimally challenging schools and classrooms. There are two frontlines for SEL as introduced into China: addressing social and emotional skills and promoting basic educational quality. Each of these is the focus of the present chapter. The chapter also suggests priorities to address over the coming years for the field of SEL to thrive in China.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Child-friendly school · Collectivism education · Emotional education · Psychological health education · China

1 Background, Understanding, and Meaning of SEL in China

1.1 Background of SEL Development in China

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (MoE) of China and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the MoE-UNICEF Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Program was launched in 2012. The program was implemented in 11 provinces and autonomous regions, including Ningxia,

This project has been supported by the Fundamental Research Funds for Central Universities of China.

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Sichuan, Yunnan, Guangxi, Gansu, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet and Qinghai (see Shi and Li 2013). The Program is aimed at addressing problems with current education in China, the challenges faced by China's education system, and students' social and emotional development. Alongside this SEL approach, however, China's "rational" education approach has also been emphasized in schools and classrooms. "Rational" education highlights the dissemination of rational knowledge and tends to downplay the accumulation of emotional experience. "Rational" education emphasizes training and improvement of students' abilities in language, logic and reasoning rather than abilities to perceive and express emotions (Lin and Yao 2014). It mainly imparts content which comprises clear, logical and systematic scientific knowledge, theories and professional skills through classroom teaching, and adopts standardized tests to evaluate teaching effectiveness. In the main, such a standardized education mode neglects the development of students' emotional development (Quan and Yao 2014).

As noted, China's schools have tended to follow the "rational" education model, emphasizing knowledge-dominated instruction, while ignoring psychological factors that are thought to be unrelated to academically-relevant cognitive processes. Thus, emotional intelligence, ethics cultivation, emotion, and character development have not been a major focus in contemporary education in China (Xu and Xiao 2015). As Lu (2004) has pointed out, a crisis in current school education in China lies in the fact that it strives to turn out one and the same type of student. Academic knowledge is regarded as the primary yardstick by which to evaluate students. Their status in the school and in their class depends on their academic performance; as long as their academic performance is satisfactory, no other dimensions such as ethical quality and character matter. Accordingly, the importance of academic knowledge is amplified and seen to represent the totality of personality and individuals' educational development (Lu 2004).

Notwithstanding the importance of academic achievement, social and emotional development is also important in the developing child (Weissberg et al. 2015). In cultivating an all-round understanding of education, we cannot avoid or put aside its social and emotional dimensions. Without attention to social and emotional development, education cannot enrich one's spiritual world, cannot give full play to the brain's function, cannot improve one's ethical quality, and cannot fully embrace one's cultural world (Zhu, B.S. 2007; Zhu, X.M. 2007).

With the advancement of urban industrialization and transformation of rural areas into small towns, the traditional social communities—such as extended families and villages—have declined and the role of traditional guiding mechanisms has diminished. Modernization, market-oriented reform, and socialist reform have all occurred in rapid order, constituting an epic and complicated social transformation. As a result, great change has taken place in people's living environment. This has meant that Chinese students today live in an era that combines tradition, modernity, and post-modernity. This era has exerted profound influence upon students' cognition, emotion, and behavior. Indeed, psychological and behavioral problems among young people in China show a rising trend (Yan and Zhang 2005).

We suggest that these changes and challenges underscore the need for social and emotional education.

In the late 1990s, international organizations such as UNICEF, in cooperation with countries in East Asia, carried out elementary education cooperation programs such as “Towards Child-Friendly Learning Environments”, which stimulated much attention in the international education community. As the notion of the “child-friendly school” (CFS) was introduced into China, there was greater emphasis on schools as an important pillar for developing “child-friendly learning environments” (Shi and Gao 2007). Between 2001 and 2005, alongside cooperation between UNICEF and the MoE, the CFS became an important part of China’s program on elementary education and early childhood care in poverty-stricken areas (Li, Z.L. 2012; Li, Z.Z. 2012).

In order to promote universal primary education, UNICEF and MoE carried out an education program, “CFS and Learner’s Quality”, during 2006–2010. Upholding the general goal of seeking ways to improve compulsory education quality, the program adopted gender-sensitive, child-centered, and participatory schooling strategies. These strategies explored ways to foster children’s all-round development, to enhance school management, and to improve teacher quality, teacher support systems, and distance learning. During 2006–2007, field investigation and international conferences further developed China’s CFS Standards. The Standards concerned four dimensions: inclusiveness and equality; effective teaching and learning; being safe, healthy and protected; and, being participatory and harmonious (Chu 2008). The central notion of the CFS was that: the teacher will listen to and respect students, help students with problems, and treat students with equality; the school head will conduct child-centered management and planning; and students will have a greater say and be more involved in things that affect them (Wu et al. 2013).

A central element of CFS is its SEL focus. This aims to provide a harmonious interpersonal learning environment for children. In addition, there is emphasis on the all-round progress of all students, recognizing that students should have a strong sense of social responsibility, a readiness to serve the nation and its people, a boldness to explore, and an ability to resolve practical problems (Shi and Liu 2007). Compared with traditional exam-oriented education, these efforts have made big strides. Education under this framework involves more than imparting knowledge; it also attends to students’ physical, psychological, and emotional growth (Quan and Yao 2014). The SEL program accentuates the training of students in core skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship handling, and responsible decision-making (CASEL 2003).

1.2 Meaning and Dimensions of SEL in China

SEL is a way to help students with self-adjustment, self-supervision, and social skills. SEL has been shown in the West to be an effective means to reduce students’

negative behavior and enhance their academic achievement (Luo and Chen 2007). SEL aptitude refers to the ability to monitor emotions as relevant to self and others and use this information to guide one's thinking and conduct. It also refers to the ability to realize and stimulate one's own emotion (self-cognition), the ability to manage one's own emotion (self-management), the ability to understand others' emotion (social cognition), and the ability to appropriately manage interpersonal relationships (relationship skills) (CASEL 2003). Capacity in each of the four dimensions reflects different characteristics at different stages of students' development (Hu and Wan 2012).

SEL also involves learning about society and emotion. This comprises one's emotional learning activities while growing up, as well as the development process which helps an individual better adapt to his/her social environment, establish social relations, honor social duties, and fulfill social responsibilities. This learning includes coursework and practice in social activities, through which students acquire social and emotional skills (Shi and Li 2013). In general, Chinese scholars hold that SEL builds a supportive environment for school teaching and management (Lin and Yao 2014), as well as home-school partnerships that foster and enhance awareness and skills among students that are essential for them to understand and manage emotion, understand life, care for others, conduct responsible decision-making, build positive interpersonal relationships, and effectively cope with challenges (Jiang 2010).

Many Chinese scholars have expanded the West's two dimensions of "self and society" into three dimensions of "self, others, and society". For example, Xu and Li, in categorizing the entities of emotional learning, highlighted the collective's role and held that emotional learning should be directed at self, at others, and at the environment (Xu and Li 2000). They went further to emphasize the influence of the social environment upon the individual's emotion; that is, the social environment contains emotion information about people and groups (Xu and Li 2000).

Following from this, Chinese scholars have developed a six-dimensional SEL framework (originating from the UNICEF meeting convened at Beijing Normal University) comprising self-cognition (knowing about and reflecting on one's own feelings), self-management (adjusting one's own emotion to assist with tasks at hand), cognition of others (understanding others' feelings and perspectives), management of others (dealing with emotional issues in interpersonal relationships), cognition of the collective (understanding the rules, norms and values of the collective and its perspective), and management of the collective (building a sense of belonging to the collective). Each of these is further demarcated into more specific social and emotional competencies. Although formal dissemination of this framework is forthcoming, preliminary appraisal of it shows clear alignments with other SEL frameworks (e.g., CASEL 2003) and—significantly—important adaptation and refinement to accommodate the cultural roots and values that render it distinctly Chinese.

2 Social Emotional Learning Research and Practice in China

2.1 Research on SEL in China

Starting from the 1990s, Chinese scholars came to realize non-academic factors as an important influence upon education and students' educational outcomes. Under the guidance of SEL theories originating in the West, China began to empirically delve into SEL, with a focus on emotional education and emotional teaching.

2.1.1 Emotional Education

Emotional education is conducted with central regard for the growth of children and adolescents as well as society's need for harmonious development. As more than a supplement to academic education, emotional education is seen as an important component of holistic education and indispensable to teaching and individual growth (Liu 2007). To Chinese teachers, the ideal of education is to develop students with self-belief, success, love, virtue, and competence. Emotional education aims to serve this goal with an optimistic orientation toward students and a rich emotional experience involving both teachers and parents in the students' education and development (Cheng 2004).

Chinese scholars have subsequently advanced knowledge on emotional education among children, youth, and young adults (undergraduates). For example, Ma (2015) suggests that young children's emotional education can be promoted through shared and group reading activities. He suggested that in kindergarten teachers should not just focus on reading and illustrating the texts; they should also attach importance to emotional education in vivid and interactive teaching. This would arouse young children's learning interest, better enable teachers and children to enjoy reading, and through these efforts, also enhance children's emotional intelligence (Ma 2015).

With regard to "at-risk" students, Yang (2014) has conducted research among abandoned children (a major social challenge in China) and found that attention to their emotional education is far from adequate. Based on an investigation of these children in a school in West China, Yang identified problems with the school's emotional education and the drawbacks caused to these children by a lack of affection. These observations further underscore the role and relevance of SEL in the educational development of children, including those at-risk (see also Martin et al. 2017, this volume).

College students' emotional education also holds significance for sound social and emotional development and quality education. Contemporary college students' emotional development can be characterized in terms of contradictions in emotional experience, a lack of emotional activity, and a complexity of emotional influence. Jia and Qiao (2010) suggested that, first and foremost, college teachers should play

an exemplary role by helping students to confront and address problematic emotional experiences; look to expand ways to implement emotional education activities; and attach greater importance to campus cultural influence and activity (Jia and Qiao 2010).

2.1.2 Emotional Teaching

Chinese scholars have also recognized the importance of emotional teaching and conducted research along these lines. Regarding training in emotional teaching skills, Li, Z.L. (2012) and Li, Z.Z. (2012) built a theoretical framework around middle school teachers' emotional teaching skills and administered a questionnaire for evaluation of these skills. Results showed that middle school teachers' emotional teaching skills can be conceptualized in terms of four dimensions: encouraging with emotion, imparting knowledge with emotion, stimulating empathy with emotion, and emotion monitoring. It was also found that middle school teachers' emotional teaching skills have much room for improvement (Li, Z.Z. 2012; Li, Z.L. 2012).

To learn more about how emotional teaching is adopted in China, Sun et al. (2014) surveyed the emotional teaching implemented in middle schools of small- and medium-sized cities through a case study of Yixing City of Jiangsu Province. The results revealed that most teachers believed that middle school teaching did not give sufficient attention to emotional factors. Only half of the teacher informants (55%) 'always' or 'frequently' thought of students' emotional needs, while only about half (52%) of teacher informants 'often' considered or 'ever' conducted emotional teaching, even on a trial basis. Most of the teachers thought that this state of affairs was attributable to the pressure put on them by an exam-oriented culture and a lack of guidance for implementing SEL (Sun et al. 2014).

2.2 Application of SEL in China's Curriculum

2.2.1 China's New Curriculum Reforms and SEL

China's new curriculum reform has proposed goals in the following three areas: knowledge and skills; process and methods; and emotion, attitude, and values. The three goals set forth in China's new curriculum reflect the nation's growing attention to students' emotional development in the primary stage of education (Li and Liu 2006). Although emotion, attitude, and values are independent, they also combine to represent one's emotional world (Cai 2004). The three are also suggested to manifest in progressive order, constituting a continuum of psychological development (Zhao 2003). Emotion is a stage of experience and feeling; attitude is manifestation of emotion; and, values affect one's character and personality (Zhong 2011). The goals concerning emotion, attitude, and values are relevant to SEL. In the Chinese context, the traditional emotional goal stresses fostering students'

patriotism, sense of collective honor and social emotion, and students' interest in learning through emotion. The goals concerning emotion, attitude, and values also stress the student's acquisition and sublimation of moral sense, aesthetical sense, and rational sense (Li and Zhang 2015).

2.2.2 Immersion of Emotional Education in Coursework

A review of international experience in implementing SEL in curriculum reveals two main means of implementation. One is to develop and implement distinct and stand-alone SEL courses. The other is to integrate SEL courses into disciplinary teaching and activities (Ma 2013). In view of China's current education and teaching status, we suggest it is advisable to embed SEL into disciplinary teaching (Li and Zhang 2015). Through embedding the substantial contents of SEL in disciplines, teachers can better harness opportunities for emotional education in the ordinary course of pedagogy (Xu et al. 2016). In practice, SEL integration in coursework represents a way for teachers to conscientiously delve into the SEL factors related to the teachers themselves, teaching content, teaching methods, class management, evaluation, and feedback (Xiao 2013).

Analysis of China's classroom teaching reveals that besides didactic instruction, group work is common. Notably, group work also offers opportunities to embed SEL into the everyday course of classroom life. Group work mobilizes students' initiative in learning, enhances communication and cooperation between teachers and students and among students, and orients the students to learn about and accept diverse points of view, to respect others, and to get along with others (Liu 2005). Unfortunately, however, actual teaching practice in this regard has some way to go. For example, teachers seldom emphasize the importance of communication skills, rarely lead students to understand and appreciate others, and give little guidance and evaluation accordingly (Luo and Chen 2007).

There are many examples and means to embed SEL into disciplinary learning and instruction. The use of role play is one such opportunity. Here, students can play characters they admire—like a mathematician or a scientist—and are guided to experience these characters' thinking and emotion, learning to understand them, their emotions, and how they resolve problems. Another example is peer instruction, where students are encouraged to teach their fellow students, helping them to better understand the challenges and needs of their peers (Li and Zhang 2015). For the early- and middle-grade students, games and competitions can also be part of the teaching; for the high school students, debate can be an effective SEL teaching mode. Here, teachers can organize students to carry out debates and encourage them to analyze issues against their historical and cultural backgrounds, to put forward solutions to problems, and speak about their personal views. In this way, students better learn to respect others' opinions, manage their emotions in a social context, and make responsible decisions (Chen and Lu 2014). The acquisition of such skills is significant to society since it propels students to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and respect the rights of different groups and individuals.

2.3 Development and Practice of Psychological Health Education in China

Psychological health education in China is about helping students to understand themselves and their relationships. It corresponds to self-cognition and self-management in SEL (CASEL 2003). The Chinese government has recently placed greater emphasis on students' psychological education. Amid the growing popularity and influence of SEL, the government and schools have renewed their recognition of the importance of students' psychological health education.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Psychological Health Education Development in China

China's involvement in psychological health education is comparatively recent, but it has witnessed rapid development in this short time. Essentially, the characteristics of psychological health education in China are as follows:

1. **The Government's Leading Role.** China's psychological health education has been conducted under the leadership of the government and mostly through the administrative department of education. Psychological health education carries policy implications. With policy support in place, psychological health education has enjoyed rapid expansion (Yao 2003).
2. **Flexible Policies.** To date, state and local governments have developed and disseminated documents on psychological health education and rolled out many policies. These tend to be flexible policies and regulations rather than rigid requirements. They have therefore not been widely adopted in educational supervision and evaluation (Shen and Peng 2002). Accordingly, the psychological health education of many schools stays at the policy level.
3. **Stressing Unity between Psychological Health Education and School Education.** There has been greater emphasis on psychological health education as an organic component of quality education and the foundation for an individual's well-rounded development. Therefore, irrespective of one's theoretical, methodological, or practical approach to psychological health education, there has been significant importance attached to its role and place in school education (Li and Liu 2006).

The training of psychological health teachers is conducted in three ways. First, higher education institutions train professional psychological health teachers, such as undergraduates and postgraduates who major in psychology and social work in normal (professionally-oriented) universities. Second, relevant colleges, universities, academic groups, and training institutions carry out comprehensive or thematic short-term professional training. Third, departments in charge of education at

provincial and municipal levels organize training or authorize organizations to conduct qualification training for locals (Ye 2008). We are beginning to see a coming together of academic research and technical training in psychological health education (Cui 2001). However, the research still lags behind teaching practice (Cao and Liu 2006).

2.3.2 Current Status of Psychological Health Education in China

Psychological health education in China tends to be most accessible in higher education institutions and least accessible in kindergarten and the early years of school. It is also more accessible in urban than in rural areas. With regard to the substance of the education itself, psychological education has much to improve. Its contents tend to be loosely arranged and its approaches are often diversified and not properly integrated within a school program or curriculum. In addition, the family's psychological health education and community counseling closely related to psychological health education have yet to be incorporated into the school psychological health education system. Taken together, the psychological health education system in China is promising, but needs improvement (Meng 2003).

2.4 Collectivism Education in China's Moral Education

As a socialist country, China focuses on collectivism education in moral education. With the expansion of SEL in China, the social cognition and self-management it emphasizes corresponds with many aspects of China's collectivism in that it stresses the role and responsibility of self in group interaction, interpersonal relationships, and teamwork. Accordingly, SEL has further secured its place in China's education and cultural traditions.

Collectivism values are the foundation of Chinese socialist values, which help students to establish socialist ideals, strengthen socialist beliefs, and better handle relationships between self and the collective, others, and society. It is an important principle of moral education to foster students' spirit of collectivism. Collectivism education is thus an important component of school education and an important component of quality education seeking to promote students' all-round development (Ding and Wang 2014).

Currently, there are diverse approaches to China's collectivism education (Wu and Li 2001). Interestingly, however, with the significant changes in Chinese society and a greater focus on the individual's own needs, collectivism education faces challenges ahead (Xiao 2011). In this context, Chinese scholars and practitioners have come to contemplate and adopt "implicit education" as a modern approach to collectivism (Deng 2012). It has done so as follows:

1. *Collectivism education by mobilizing teachers.* It is considered a precondition that the school has a well-organized teaching contingent, adopting a rigorous teaching style. Teachers play an exemplary role for students, improving their social and emotional wellbeing, and guiding their conduct. In so doing, teachers exert implicit influence on students (Liang and Wang 2015).
2. *Collectivism education through classroom activities.* The classroom is a basic cell of the school and one of its key collectives. It constitutes a core channel for collectivism education. Classroom-based collectivism's biggest advantage lies in the fact that all class members can be equal, with the same duties and responsibilities. Although the class has formal student roles, these roles are not intended to impose or connote privilege or superior status on these students. These students play their role in order to serve the class (Yang 2011).
3. *Collectivism education based on school tradition.* The school's tradition embodies ethics, and the style and spirit of collectivism. The well-established school tradition is a trove of collectivism education. The school motto epitomizes the school's tradition and spirit and is a focus for collectivism education as it exerts subtle inspiration for students (Gu 2006).
4. *Collectivism education via engaging activities.* Collectivism education activities can be conducted in engaging ways. Activities during Science and Technology Week and the Small Invention Festival are good examples. Both these important programs guide students to set targets, consult data, and seek breakthroughs in contemplation. In these ways, teachers help students to expand their knowledge, stimulate their thinking, broaden their horizons, and sharpen their hands-on abilities (Zheng 2002). All these activities are also aimed at fostering and enhancing cohesion of the class, uplift the students' notion and awareness of collectivism, and encourage students to value the collective and to work for others. By participating in such activities as tourism, camping, hiking, swimming, cycling, and mountain climbing, the students learn to further integrate into their society. In this process, they not only strengthen their body and social and emotional development, they also participate in collectivism education.
5. *Collectivism education in collective tasks, activities, and work.* Application to collective tasks, activities, and work enhances one's sense of responsibility, improves the collective's cohesion, adds to friendship and solidarity among students, and encourages students to help each other and to treat each other with sincerity and integrity. Education in this area is significant in that it enables students to learn to be self-reliant and cultivates their sense of responsibility to self and others (Shi 2003). This form of education usually takes the form of life skills training. By involving children in contextual learning and employing activity-based pedagogy, educators seek to develop a wider learning that can further help motivate students to make responsible decision and take initiative in life.

3 Conclusion

Strengthening students' SEL is important as education in China undergoes profound reform and changes. Strengthening SEL can help promote the development of non-cognitive psychological factors and improve students' academic performance (Lin and Yao 2014). Strengthening SEL can also help students develop better understanding of themselves and their interpersonal relationships, preparing them for post-school life (Lin and Yao 2014; Xu and Xiao 2015). As China promotes education for all-round development, there will be a need for guidance from new and emerging educational philosophies and research to further improve educational quality. SEL embodies the idea of education for all-round development, values students' interests and experience, and overcomes some of the limits imposed by an overemphasis on knowledge-based education. Improving students' SEL is thus vital for the success of education for all-round development in China.

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Social and Emotional Learning and Personal Best Goals in Hong Kong

Gerald Kam Yuen Wu and Magdalena Mo Ching Mok

Abstract Over the years, Hong Kong's examination-driven learning environment has emphasised academic achievement more than social and emotional learning (SEL). Although the Hong Kong Government is now promoting all-round development, including strengthening students' social and emotional competence (SEC), no explicit territory-wide policy on SEL has been implemented. In this chapter, the authors draw on recent developments in curriculum and recent research into personal best goals as a means to explore the SEL and SEC of students in Hong Kong. The chapter demonstrates that through 'top-down' approaches (e.g. the implementation of curriculum) and 'bottom-up' approaches (e.g. nurturing individual students' personal goals and goal setting), there are significant opportunities to promote SEL and SEC in Hong Kong—and beyond.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Personal best goals · Religious and moral education · Catholic education · Student attitudes towards school

1 Introduction

Learning environments in Hong Kong, very much influenced by Confucian philosophy, tend to be examination-driven and achievement-oriented (Ho 1994; Kam et al. 2011; Tran 2013). In Hong Kong society, students are evaluated in terms of their academic achievement and academic standing relative to others

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(Chen and Wong 2015; Cheng 1997; Tao and Hong 2014). Education is seen as the primary means of upward social mobility (Cheng 1997; Cheung and Leung 2015; Mok 2015; Tao and Hong 2014). Accordingly, students are encouraged to strive for excellence in academic performance and see high academic achievement as one of the most important obligations they have to meet (Tao and Hong 2014).

Moreover, instead of pursuing mastery goal structures that emphasise the importance of learning, understanding, individual effort and improvement (Wolters 2004), performance goal structures are predominant, emphasising achievement and competition between students while undervaluing effort and individual improvement (Chen and Wong 2015; Tao and Hong 2014). The vast majority of schools in Hong Kong, especially secondary schools, thus focus their efforts on students' academic achievement and competition. In this chapter, we explore recent curriculum developments and a recently proposed goal framework (personal best [PB] goals) that represent promising efforts to promote students' social and emotional learning (SEL) in Hong Kong. We first review SEL frameworks, curriculum and assessment in Hong Kong. We then summarise findings from our own work exploring the role of PB goals in students' SEL.

2 Social and Emotional Learning and Its Implementation in Hong Kong

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2005) referred to social and emotional learning (SEL) as the process of helping a person develop the social and emotional competence (SEC) necessary for achieving success in school and life. SEL programmes target five areas of interrelated SECs: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (CASEL 2003; Weissberg et al. 2015). Durlak et al. (2011) indicated that school-based SEL programmes can bring about positive impacts not only on students' SEC, but also on their academic attainments, conduct and social behaviour. Durlak et al. (2011) reported that SEL interventions led to substantial improvements in students' attitudes and behaviour, social and emotional skills and academic achievement. CASEL (2005) also pointed out that within a safe, caring and well-managed school environment, SEL programmes result in a greater sense of school belonging and academic achievement. Humphrey (2013) also identified SEL interventions that reduced students' negative attitudes and behaviour at school.

In the 1990s, the Hong Kong Government began to pay greater attention to the increasing trend of behavioural and emotional problems among Hong Kong youth, including suicide and school violence (Sun and Shek 2010; Wong 2004). The government sought to overhaul the education system with increasing focus on the all-round development of students in Hong Kong schools (Curriculum Development Council 2001; Education Commission 1997, 2000). As stated in the Education Commission Report No. 7 at that time (Education Commission 1997), one of the aims of education in Hong Kong was to foster all-round development

covering ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, so that its students can be more active and responsible.

Later, the school curriculum of 2001 (Curriculum Development Council 2001) emphasised developing nine essential generic skills in students, all considered crucial for helping them learn how to learn: collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, information technology, numeracy, problem-solving, self-management and study skills. Notably, a comparison of these aims and policies with the five competencies of SEL (CASEL 2003) demonstrates that Hong Kong education has been mindful of the importance of students' SEL and SEC. However, as yet, there is apparently no explicit government policy on SEL included in school curriculum, other than the dissemination of a policy on whole-person development under the banner of 'life-wide learning' (LWL; Education Bureau of the Government of the HKSAR 2015a). LWL encompasses moral and civic education, physical and aesthetic development, career-related experiences, community service and intellectual development. The main target of LWL is to put students in authentic settings so that the skills essential for whole-person development (e.g. problem-solving, collaboration, etc.) can be developed. LWL programmes can be as varied as extra-curricular, community service and career-related activities.

Significantly, it is not mandatory for schools to implement LWL (Education Bureau of the Government of the HKSAR 2015b). Schools in Hong Kong are free to formulate their own SEL programmes. For many schools, this first entailed assessment of students' SEC—leading to the need to develop appropriate instrumentation. In 2003, the Assessment Programme for Affective and Social Outcomes (APASO) was developed and launched by the Government (Education Bureau of the Government of the HKSAR 2015c) and then revised as APASO-II in 2010 (Education Bureau of the Government of the HKSAR 2015d). All APASO-II scales underwent a thorough validation process involving approximately 150,000 (80,000 primary, 70,000 secondary) students from 329 (203 primary, 126 secondary) local schools and approximately 300 students from four special education schools. Scales were subsequently revised in consultation with schools and the government, based on the validation results. Norm data of the APASO-II scales were collected from a sample of approximately 210,000 (80,000 primary and 130,000 secondary) students enrolled at Primary Three (Grade 3) to Secondary Seven (Grade 13) at 352 (200 primary and 152 secondary) local schools. This represented about 36% of all local primary students, and over 29% of secondary students in Hong Kong.

As of 2010, all schools in Hong Kong were entitled to use APASO-II to obtain objective data for in-depth understanding of their students' affective and social development. The APASO-II for primary school (APASO-II [primary]) instrument is composed of four dimensions, which are then separated into eight scales and 53 subscales. The APASO-II for secondary school (APASO-II [secondary]) instrument is composed of five dimensions, which are then separated into 12 scales and 62 subscales. To note, the scale 'Attitudes to School' in APASO-II has been used by the Education Bureau as one of the 'Key Performance Measures' for school self-evaluation under the School Development and Accountability framework since

Table 1 Scales and subscales of the APASO-II

PRIMARY	
Scale name	Subscale name
Dimension: self	
Self-concept	1. General school, 2. Mathematics, 3. Parent relationships, 4. Peer relations, 5. Physical appearance, 6. Reading
Dimension: self-others	
Interpersonal relationships	7. Care for others, 8. Inappropriate assertiveness, 9. Respect for others
Dimension: self-school	
Attitudes to school (quality of school life)	10. Achievement, 11. Experience, 12. General satisfaction, 13. Negative affect, 14. Opportunity, 15. Social integration, 16. Teacher–student relationship
Motivation	17. Affiliation, 18. Competition, 19. Effort, 20. Praise, 21. Social concern, 22. Social power, 23. Task, 24. Token
Causal attribution	25. Failure ability attribution, 26. Failure effort attribution, 27. Failure strategy attribution, 28. Success ability attribution, 29. Success effort attribution, 30. Success strategy attribution
Learning competency	31. Creative thinking, 32. Critical thinking, 33. Problem-solving
Independent learning capacity	34. Academic affect, 35. Academic initiation, 36. Academic monitoring, 37. Academic self-concept, 38. Change to improve, 39. Cost of help seeking, 40. Education aims, 41. Goal setting, 42. Inquisitiveness, 43. Strategic help seeking, 44. Study environment control, 45. Study plan, 46. Value of school work
Dimension: self-society	
Values	47. Code of conduct, 48. Commitment, 49. Attitudes toward the nation, 50. Perseverance, 51. Sense of responsibility, 52. Social harmony, 53. Well-behaved
SECONDARY	
Scale name	Subscale name
Dimension: self	
Self-concept	1. Emotional stability, 2. General, 3. Honesty/trustworthiness, 4. Mathematics, 5. Parent relationships, 6. Physical appearance, 7. Verbal
Health and well-being	8. Test anxiety
Stress management	9. Recreation, 10. Self-encouragement, 11. Situation control
Dimension: self-others	
Interpersonal relationships	12. Care for others, 13. Interpersonal competence, 14. Respect for others, 15. Share, 16. Social skills, 17. Support
Dimension: self-school	
Attitudes to school (quality of school life)	18. Achievement, 19. Experience, 20. General satisfaction, 21. Negative affect, 22. Opportunity, 23. Social integration, 24. Teacher–student relationship
Motivation	25. Affiliation, 26. Competition, 27. Effort, 28. Praise, 29. Social concern, 30. Social power, 31. Task, 32. Token
Learning competency	33. Creative thinking, 34. Critical thinking, 35. Problem-solving, 36. Time management
Independent learning capacity	37. Academic affect, 38. Academic initiation, 39. Academic monitoring, 40. Academic self-concept, 41. Change to improve, 42. Cost of help seeking, 43. Goal setting, 44. Inquisitiveness, 45. Reading strategy, 46. Strategic help seeking, 47. Study environment control, 48. Study plan, 49. Value of school work

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

SECONDARY	
Scale name	Subscale name
Dimension: self-society	
Leadership	50. Leadership
Ethical conducts	51. Commitment, 52. Ethical conduct, 53. No indulgence lifestyle, 54. Perseverance, 55. Self-control
National identity and global citizenship	56. Duty to the nation, 57. Emotional attachment to the nation, 58. Global citizenship, 59. Attitudes toward the nation
Dimension: self-future	
Goals of life	60. Expectation on career, 61. Goal setting, 62. Goals of life

Table 2 Scales and subscales representing social and emotional competence: integration of CASEL and APASO-II

Scale name	Subscale
Competency: self-awareness	
1. Self-concept	Physical appearance, Academic self-concept, Parent relationships, General school, Peer relations
2. Motivation	Effort, Task, competition, Social power, Affiliation, Social concern, Praise, Token
Competency: self-management	
1. Goal setting	Goal setting, Academic initiation
2. Planning	Study plan
3. Help seeking	Costs of help seeking, Strategic help seeking
4. Environment control	Study environment control
5. Positive values	Perseverance, Sense of responsibility, Value of school work, Education aims, Inquisitiveness, Academic affect
6. Self-monitoring	Academic monitoring
7. Self-regulation	Change to improve
8. Problem-solving	Problem-solving, Creative thinking, Critical thinking
Competency: social awareness	Code of conduct, Well-behaved, National identity: Rights and duties of citizens, Social harmony
Competency: relationship skills	Care for others, Respect for others, Inappropriate assertiveness
Competency: responsible decision-making	Commitment, Success ability attribution, Success effort attribution, Success strategy attribution, Failure ability attribution, Failure effort attribution, Failure strategy

2003/04. Details of the APASO-II (primary) and APASO-II (secondary) instruments can be found in Table 1.

Of particular relevance to this chapter, inspection of the scales and subscales of the APASO-II instrument indicates that it is in alignment with the five competencies defined by the CASEL, as shown in Table 2.

3 SEL in Hong Kong's Catholic Junior Secondary Students

Although SEL has been implemented in all school sectors in Hong Kong (albeit to varying degrees of depth and breadth), for the purposes of the present discussion, we focus on the Catholic sector. Education provided by the Catholic Church has been taking place in Hong Kong for more than 160 years (Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong 2002). As of 2015, Hong Kong has a total of 252 Catholic schools (32 kindergartens, 107 primary and 85 middle and secondary schools; 1 vocational school; 18 adult education institutes; 7 special schools; and 2 post-secondary institutes; Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong 2015).

As with all schools and school sectors, Catholic schools in Hong Kong are not unique in terms of the challenges (and opportunities) they face as society and societal values change (Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong 2002; RME Curriculum Task Group 2006; Tse 2015). Accordingly, between March 2000 and December 2001, the Diocesan Synod called for a holistic reform in Catholic education in Hong Kong (Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong 2002). In response to the call for reform, one of the major policies launched by the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong involved development of the 'Religious and Moral Education Curriculum' in 2006 by a newly established Religious and Moral Education Curriculum Task Group (RME Curriculum Task Group 2006). This RME curriculum sought to address academic, moral and spiritual dimensions that would be relevant to both Catholic and non-Catholic students from kindergarten through to senior secondary school. Supportive training and resourcing, such as teachers' professional development and assistance from parish and diocesan organisations, was also arranged.

The curriculum can be characterised as non-catechetical religious education catering for the large numbers of non-Catholic students in the Catholic education sector (RME Curriculum Task Group 2006, p. 34). Instead of delivering education purely on religious knowledge, skills and values, the priority of the new RME curriculum was on moral and broader spiritual values. The mission of this curriculum encompassed cultivating one's value of life, searching for one's own direction in life and fostering sound values related to faith—broadly defined (Tse 2015). The design and approach to implement the RME curriculum also took into account the physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, moral and spiritual traits relevant to each stage of students' growth and development (RME Curriculum Task Group 2006, p. 28). The curriculum was broadly categorised into subject-specific and non-subject-specific components, and its implementation required the joint cooperation of stakeholders within and outside the school. Religious teachers were responsible for teaching the subject-specific component in formal lessons, while other school staff attended to the non-subject-specific component such as the promotion of a positive school moral culture through school campus broadcast programmes (RME Curriculum Task Group 2006). Alongside this, professional development programmes related to the curriculum were also organised for all school staff.

The curriculum comprised of 30 units for junior primary level, 30 units for senior primary level, 35 units for junior secondary level and 39 units for senior secondary level. For each unit, the teaching time ranged from approximately 3–4 h. A set of textbooks was developed and published in accordance with the curriculum (RME Curriculum Task Group 2006). The curriculum started in Primary One and Secondary One of the Catholic schools, respectively, in the 2011–2012 academic year, and moved up to the next level every subsequent academic year. By the 2013–2014 academic year, it had reached Primary Three and Secondary Three, respectively (Religious and Moral Education Curriculum Development Centre 2014, August).

Importantly, a review of the values and attitudes fostered through the RME curriculum revealed that this curriculum can be re-categorised to correspond with the five competencies defined by the CASEL, as shown in Table 3. In this regard, the RME curriculum implementation is, by and large, a SEL programme in nature. Indeed, according to the taxonomy derived by Humphrey (2013), the implementation of the RME curriculum can be broadly described as a universal SEL intervention comprising multiple components, including prescriptive school- and curriculum-based teacher-led long-term programmes, a range of supportive activities focusing on the creation of a supportive and positive school culture, and parental development and organisational involvement.

As described above, in 2013, the implementation of the RME curriculum reached Primary Three and Secondary Three in the Catholic schools of Hong Kong, respectively. One question is whether the SEC of students in these Catholic schools was enhanced as a result of its implementation. In 2014, Wu (2015) examined the attitudes of 3478 students towards their school, from Secondary One to Secondary Three at 18 aided Catholic secondary schools in Hong Kong. Key aspects of the students' attitudes towards their school examined in his research were: (1) relationship with teachers; (2) morale; (3) perception of the principal and (4) attitude to discipline. The instrument used by Wu for his exploration—the Attitudes of Students towards Their School (ASTS)—was developed from the questionnaire by Flynn and Mok (2002) in their research among Catholic schools. The psychometric

Table 3 Categorisation of the values and attitudes developed from the RME curriculum in terms of SECs

Social and emotional competencies	Values and attitudes developed from the RME curriculum
1. Self-awareness	The search for meaning in life, Self-reflection, Integrity, Peace
2. Self-management	Tolerance, Commitment, Self-responsibilities, Hope, Perseverance, Joy and positive outlook, Chastity, Self-restraint, Goodness and beauty
3. Social awareness	Empathy, Forgiveness and simplicity, Thanksgiving and respect, Caring, Gratitude
4. Relationship skills	Helpful to others, Trust, Sacrifice for others, Respect
5. Responsible decision-making	Contentment (not avarice), Environmentalism, Discernment, Moral courage, Service, Commitment and patriotism, Justice

Note. RME = Religious and Moral Education; SEC = Social and Emotional Competence

properties of the ASTS scales have been confirmed using factor analysis and Rasch analysis. Construct validity and reliability have also been established (Wu 2015). Findings showed that the large-scale RME programme implemented in Catholic schools played a role in influencing and promoting students' SEC. Specifically, students presented more positive attitudes with regard to teacher–student relationships, morale, perception of the principal and school discipline (Wu 2015). While Wu recognised that further investigation was needed to further validate these results, it was considered reasonable to attribute at least some of these positive findings to the RME programme. To the extent that this programme had salient SEC elements in it, we can also consider it to be an effective SEL intervention.

4 Students' Personal Best Goal Orientation and Attitudes Towards School

The discussion thus far has traversed some recent and novel SEL-relevant work in the large Catholic school sector in Hong Kong. Another novel area of SEL application relates to personal goals and goal setting. Under its 'self-management' SEL competency, CASEL (2003) identifies the importance of setting and working towards achieving personal and academic goals. Whereas most goal research has focused on the 'classic' dichotomous performance and mastery goals (see Elliot 2005 for a review), here we explore the more novel 'personal best' goals that we suggest have significant alignment and synergy with SEL and its competencies.

Personal best (PB) goals, as proposed by Martin (2006), emphasise exceeding one's previous best effort or performance. Martin (2006) further described PB goals as specific, challenging, competitively self-referenced and self-improvement targets towards which students strive. Of relevance to the present chapter, we suggest there are links between PB goal orientation, SEL and the RME curriculum. As discussed above, the RME curriculum is comparable to SEL in that it fosters SECs such as self-responsibility, self-reflection, perseverance, tolerance, self-restraint and the search for meaning in life. Underpinning these attributes is a commitment to personal growth and personal striving, akin to what is proposed under the PB goal framework (Martin 2006). In this respect, then, the RME interventions in Hong Kong's Catholic schools may also support students' PB goal striving.

Although some preliminary PB work has been conducted in this area, unlike the present chapter, this work was not intended to focus on SEL or SEC. For example, Liem et al. (2012) examined the role of PB goals in students' social functioning and concluded that students holding a PB goal presented more positive teacher–student relationships and attitudes towards peer cooperation. To explain such connections, it was considered that students' PB goal orientation has enabling effects on their attitudes towards school and positive predisposing effects on their attitudes towards school discipline.

To explore PB goals from an RME and SEL perspective in the Hong Kong context, an instrument measuring students' PB orientation (PBO) was administered together with Wu's (2015) ASTS instrument. As shown in Table 4, the PBO instrument consisted of six items to operationalise one factor: students' personal best orientation. The response options of the items on a four-point Likert-type scale were: strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree. The dimensionality of the scale was examined by exploratory factor analysis, using the statistical program SPSS (version 21). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of the sampling adequacy index was 0.87, and Bartlett's test of sphericity achieved a statistically significant level ($\chi^2(15) = 11853.95, p < 0.001$). These indices indicated that the data for this scale were suitable for exploratory factor analysis. All items fell into one single factor in the exploratory factor analysis as only one factor had an eigenvalue greater than one. The factor accounted for 64% of variance in the data. The factor loadings ranged from 0.59 to 0.88, with '4—I always strive for a breakthrough in my learning'—having the highest factor loading of 0.88. The results from the exploratory factor analysis supported using the scale to measure PBO. Cronbach's alpha coefficient, 0.89, showed that the reliability of the scale was high.

Following from this measurement work, using structural equation modelling (with *Mplus* 7.11; Muthén and Muthén 2015), we examined the relationship between students' PB goal orientation and key SECs in the form of morale, interpersonal relationships and attitudes to school. Notwithstanding some well-known issues with cross-sectional data (e.g. ordering of constructs, etc.), we found some notable connections between PB goals and SECs. The fit indexes (CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.067) indicated acceptable fit between the hypothesised model and the observed data (Brown 2006; Hu and Bentler 1999; Schermelleh-Engel et al. 2003). With the exception of the path between PB goal and attitudes to school discipline, the standardised values of the paths were all significant ($p < 0.01$ or $p < 0.05$). Key parameters were as follows: PB goals (1) positively predicted morale; (2) positively predicted perception of school principal; and (3) were significantly correlated with interpersonal relationships. Also of relevance to SEL in terms of relational constructs (CASEL 2003), the

Table 4 Items in the personal best orientation (PBO) instrument

Item
1. 我會加倍努力改善成績 I work extra hard to improve my performance
2. 我會盡力把習作做得更好 I try my best to do even better
3. 我以超越自己為目標 I aim at out-performing my previous record
4. 我不斷尋求學習上的突破 I always strive for a breakthrough in my learning
5. 我不和別人比較, 只求發揮自己所長 I do not compare myself to others; I just do my best
6. 我從各方面發掘自我潛能 I discover my potential in various aspects

results revealed that teacher–student relationships positively predicted: (1) attitudes to school; (2) perception of school principal; and (3) student morale. Thus, students’ PB goals presented significant predictive links to important SEL constructs in the form of morale and attitudes to school and a significant correlational link with teacher–student relationships.

5 Implications for Practice

The development of PB goals among students not only brings about positive impacts on academic outcomes, but also helps optimise SEL and constructively influences students’ SEC, attitudes and behaviour in schools. In this regard, the implementation of school-based SEL programmes, together with the advocacy of developing PB goals among students, shed light on how to transform the current achievement-oriented environment to one that promotes all-round development among students in Hong Kong. Given PBs are specific, challenging and competitively self-referenced targets towards which students strive (Martin 2006), they can be incorporated into ‘self-management’ components of SEL (CASEL 2003). Martin (2011) has developed an intervention plan by which educators can help students work towards setting and attaining PB goals. For example, educators might look to help students to develop clear, realistic and specific goals for social and emotional development that are challenging and personally competitive (Martin 2006, 2011). Educators might consider doing this in conjunction with the use of a Personal Best Index (PBI), which is a more formalised assessment of PB goals (Martin 2006). The PBI quantifies the extent to which a student exceeds a previous personal best effort or performance. It is aimed at being a supportive tool to recognise students’ personalised success beyond comparative grading, which pervades the educational system (Harris 2011; Martin 2006), including in Hong Kong. Thus, in addition to competitive and comparative tracking, educators and students can track and nurture a student’s personal progress and personal improvement.

6 Conclusion

The examination-driven learning environment in Hong Kong emphasises academic achievement more than SEL. Although the Hong Kong Government promotes all-round development, including strengthening students’ SEC, no explicit territory-wide policy on SEL has been implemented. In this chapter, we explored one recent sector-wide approach (i.e. the RME curriculum) to promoting SEL and SEC in Hong Kong schools. The RME curriculum in the Catholic sector aligns well with the SEL competencies identified by CASEL (2003). We also explored a novel goal-setting approach that aligns with the personal growth tenets underpinning SEL. Specifically, PB goals were examined and found to have significant links with

important SECs in the form of interpersonal relationships, attitudes to school and student morale. This suggests that promoting students' PB goal orientation may be a means to facilitate SEL in schools. Taken together, through 'top-down' approaches such as the implementation of curriculum and 'bottom-up' approaches such as through nurturing individual students' personal goals and goal setting, there are significant opportunities to promote SEL and SEC in Hong Kong—and beyond.

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Social and Emotional Learning as a Solution for Adolescent Problems in Korea

Sun Kyung Lee and Mimi Bong

Abstract There has been a recent movement in Korea to invigorate whole-person education in K-12 schools by developing students' social and emotional competencies (SECs). As a means to promote these SECs, social and emotional learning (SEL) is receiving heightened attention in Korea. One reason for this is because adolescents' psychological and behavioral problems (including depression, suicide, bullying, harassment, and delinquency) are on the rise. In part to address these national challenges, the Korean government has instituted the Character Education Promotion Act (CEPA). Under this Act, SEL is now a particular focus in schools and school subjects. In this chapter, we scrutinize the trends and essence of SEL-related research and practice in Korea, particularly as relevant to CEPA.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Social and emotional competencies · Whole-person education · Character education · Character Education Promotion Act · Confucianism

1 Introduction

A review of the Korean social and emotional learning (SEL) literature reveals several trends. Early Korean studies treated SEL as equivalent to ethics learning. There was a heavy focus on the role of social and emotional factors in students' moral reasoning and the development of SEL programs targeting ethical behavior. More recent studies, in comparison, generally adopt the definition of SEL offered by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2015). CASEL identifies the following five interrelated SEL competence dimensions:

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self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL 2011; Durlak et al. 2015; Zins and Elias 2007). Following CASEL, many Korean SEL researchers have proposed what should be included in the core social and emotional competencies (SECs) that allow effective interpersonal communication and conflict resolution (SEL facets under CASEL). Honesty, empathy, sense of responsibility, as well as respect, caring, and understanding for and collaboration with others (also identified by CASEL) are important SECs, along with decorum and filial piety that are unique to Korean SEL.

SEL in Korea, which is closely intertwined with character education, aims at cultivating the inner self and fostering the human qualities and capabilities necessary for harmoniously living with others, the community, and nature. In fact, the Korean government's effort to thwart the increasing rate of adolescent maladjustment problems at school has culminated in the Character Education Promotion Act (CEPA), drafted by the Ministry of Education and legislated in 2015. The purpose of this law is to support and promote the development of sound and positive character among Korean students, so that they can achieve success at school and become productive citizens. SEL has been discussed most frequently in the context of special education and non-academic subjects such as ethics, music, art, and physical education in Korea, and its scope is expanding gradually to the context of other academic subjects such as mathematics and science. In this chapter, we scrutinize the trends and essence of the SEL-related research and practice in Korea.

2 Background of Social and Emotional Learning in Korea

2.1 Discrepancy Between Cognitive and Emotional Competence of Korean Youth

Korean youth demonstrates strong performance in various tests of cognitive competence. As evidenced in recent international comparison studies such as TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study; Mullis et al. 2012) and PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2013), Korea typically emerges as one of the top performing countries in these comparisons, whether it is an assessment of reading, mathematics, or problem solving. While many rave about the superior academic performance of Korean adolescents, relatively few pay attention to the high incidence of violence, bullying, depression, and suicide among the same youth. Evidenced in cross-nation comparisons of the adolescent core competence index, there is significant discrepancy between the cognitive competence and the social and emotional competence of Korean students (Kim et al. 2010). Among the thirty-six countries surveyed, Korea ranked second in cognitive competence but thirty-fifth in SEC (comprising such factors as caring for and working harmoniously with others).

Not only are Korean adolescents relatively lower in SEC, they also manifest relatively more emotional problems. According to the 2014 online survey by the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare on youth health behaviors ($N = 72,060$), 37% of the participating youth expressed that they were feeling high levels of stress in their everyday life; 27% said that they had felt sad or helpless during the past two weeks to a degree that interfered with their normal daily operations; and 33% mentioned that they had recently attempted suicide (Online Survey of Youth Health Behavior 2014). According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) mortality database, Korea has the world's highest suicide rate among the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with its suicide rate dramatically increasing, unlike that in other countries (Son 2014).

In addition to the increasing levels of stress, depression, and suicidal ideation, violence and bullying among youth has become an issue in Korea. The 2012 survey on adolescents' exposure to harmful environment by the Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family ($N = 15,382$) showed that 77% of the responding youth admitted involvement in school bullying as a perpetrator during the past year. Moreover, 11% reported that they had experienced violence in the form of assault, extortion, blackmailing, and bullying by other students, school friends, or seniors and juniors inside and outside school (Korean Statistical Information Service 2013).

This issue is taken seriously by many educators and policy makers in Korea because the age students first experience school violence becomes younger every year. In the 2013 nationwide survey on adolescent school violence conducted by the Foundation for Preventing Youth Violence, the majority of the respondents indicated that they had first experienced school violence when they were in Grade 5. In a similar such survey conducted the previous year, Grade 6 was predominantly identified. When the data were categorized by school level, 80% of students experienced their first exposure to school violence during elementary school (Kim et al. 2014). These records suggest that preventive measures to target exposure to school violence are urgently needed.

2.2 Whole-Person Education as a Solution to Adolescent Problems

Two factors associated with the phenomena described above suggest SECs are centrally relevant—and by implication, a potential means to help alleviate these problems. Across the range of potential SECs to target, it is evident that social relationships represent a salient point for intervention. For example, major predictors of youth suicide are conflict with family, conflict with friends, stress, depression, and violence (Kim and Lee 2015). Another factor seems to be students' lack of knowledge and skills to appropriately handle the situation. In a 2012 survey by the Foundation for Preventing Youth Violence, about one third of the adolescent respondents conceded witnessing school violence. More than half of them,

however, pretended not to have witnessed it or ignored it because they feared retaliation or did not know how to behave in the situation (Park et al. 2012). These data show that many students are not adequately equipped to solve problems or to make a responsible decision when facing difficult social situations.

Noting these apparent inadequacies among Korean youth, there has been a recent movement in Korea to invigorate ‘whole-person education’ designed to cultivate SECs among students in K-12 schools. These efforts have led to the more recent Character Education Promotion Act (CEPA; Law No. 13004), implemented in 2015. CEPA emphasizes that professionals in education, particularly teachers, should be aware of the definition of a socially and emotionally competent person and the ways to nurture and support such an individual (Jang 2015). In this regard, character education programs in Korea tend toward the promotion of students’ SECs and teaching key strategies for students to maintain successful and healthy social lives in the family, school, and community (Kim 2015a). Because SEL has direct theoretical and practical relevance to character education, SEL and SEC are currently receiving heightened attention from researchers in Korea (Do 2015; Jeong 2013).

3 Characteristics of Social and Emotional Learning in Korea

3.1 Adoption of CASEL’s SEL Framework

Since 2010, experts and professionals interested in character education have started to design curriculum for moral and ethical education in Korea. Many of them have adopted the SEL framework proposed by the CASEL, which defines SEL as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to 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 2015). CASEL (2015) maintains that “many risky behaviors (e.g., drug use, violence, bullying, and dropping out) can be prevented or reduced when multiyear, integrated efforts are used to develop students’ social and emotional skills. This is best done through effective classroom instruction, student engagement in positive activities in and out of the classroom, and broad parent and community involvement in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.”

The SECs discussed by CASEL (2015) are distinguished along the dimensions of ‘self versus other’ and ‘awareness versus management.’ Combining these two dimensions (and adding one additional facet) produces five categories of SEL core competencies: self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; relationship management (also called relationship skills), and responsible decision-making (CASEL 2011; Zins et al. 2004; Zins and Elias 2007). Table 1 presents the definition and specific skills associated with each SEL competence category.

Table 1 Definition of core SEL competencies and corresponding skills and Eastern virtues

Core SEL competence	Definition	Specific skill	Eastern virtue
Self-awareness	The ability to accurately recognize one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and recognition of one’s own and others’ emotions • Recognition of strengths in, and mobilizing positive feelings about, self, school, family, and support networks • Knowing one’s needs and values • Sense of self-efficacy, self-confidence, and optimism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 愛己 (Knowing the meaning of one’s existence and loving oneself) • 修己 (Cultivating healthy mind and body) • 四端 (Recognizing one’s moral emotions such as compassion)
Self-management	The ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling impulses, aggression, and self-destructive, antisocial behavior • Managing personal and interpersonal stress • Setting short- and long-term goals • Planning thoughtfully and thoroughly • Having persistence • Mobilizing positive motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 去人慾 (Controlling human desires that are against moral principles) • 誠意 (Controlling one’s mind by sincere self-discipline) • 立志 (Setting one’s goals and values and making an effort to accomplish them)
Social awareness	The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciating diversity • Showing respect to others • Listening carefully and accurately • Increasing empathy and sensitivity to others’ feelings • Understanding others’ perspectives, points of view, and feelings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 三人行必有我師 (Having positive and respectful attitude toward others)
Relationship skills	The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperating • Communicating clearly and listening actively • Resisting inappropriate social pressure • Negotiating conflict constructively • Seeking and offering help when needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 反求諸己 (Searching and admitting one’s own fault when conflict occurs) • 忠恕 (Seeking positive social interaction founded upon one’s own faithfulness)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Core SEL competence	Definition	Specific skill	Eastern virtue
Responsible decision-making	The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating situations perceptively and identifying problems clearly • Exercising social decision-making and problem-solving skills • Engaging in self-evaluation and reflection • Conducting oneself with personal, moral, and ethical responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 的中 (Acting for proper goals at the right time) • 共治 (Planning grounded on shared beliefs and making responsible decisions and behaviors)

Note Contents represent authors' reorganization of: (a) SEL competencies in CASEL (2015); (b) Table 13.1 in Elias et al. (2008, pp. 251–252); (c) description of core SEL competence in Zins and Elias (2007, p. 238); and (d) Table 1 in Han et al. (2010, pp. 196–197)

Son and her colleagues (2009, 2010) affirmed that providing school-wide SEL interventions based on the CASEL framework can help solve many adolescent problems in Korea. These researchers agreed that SEL intervention programs incorporating CASEL principles can equip students with important knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs, while also helping them cope successfully with various social, emotional, and academic situations. SECs, when fostered under the warm care and protection of teachers, parents, and society, are expected to prevent students from engaging in problematic behaviors and lead them to accomplish academic success (Shin 2013; Son and Lee 2009; Son et al. 2010).

3.2 Character Education and Incorporation of Eastern Philosophy

Early conceptualizations of SEL in Korea intertwined closely with character education. Deeply rooted in Confucianism, the primary aim of character education is to enhance personal awareness, social awareness, and practices that shape one into an ideal human being (Jang 2010; Kim and Kim 2012). Confucianism asserts that humans are good by nature and one should strive to preserve and expand this good nature by cultivating one's inner self (Jang 2010). Character education is thus viewed as a self-actualization process that entails self-discipline, conservation of harmonious relationships with others, development of a sense of social responsibility, and practice of Confucianism in one's daily life to accomplish human duty (Kim and Kim 2012).

Character education shares with SEL the aim of producing self-regulated and socially responsible learners. This conceptual similarity has prompted a group of Korean researchers to integrate SEL into character education (e.g., Cho et al. 1998), several of whom even claimed that acquisition of SEC is the most critical essence of character education (Do 2015; Son et al. 2010). Nonetheless, early SEL-related studies in Korea, under the name of character education, were criticized for focusing only on individual SEL components, such as emotional intelligence, social skills, and problem-solving skills, rather than the full SEL framework (Son and Lee 2009). While some still treat Confucianism or moral education as a critical ingredient in character education (e.g., Jang 2015; Kim and Kim 2012), others focus on SEL as the key theoretical underpinning of character education (e.g., Do 2015; Jeong 2013).

Meanwhile, Korean researchers have also highlighted various potential connections between Eastern philosophy and SEL. Several SEL intervention programs have been developed that emphasize the cultivation of SEL competence-based Eastern virtues (e.g., Han et al. 2010; Hwang 2015; Lee and Chi 2010; Son et al. 2010). One such intervention, developed by Han et al. (2010), used the Nine Chinese Classics of moral thoughts and judgments (see Table 1). Underlying the intervention was the recognition that any SEC is influenced heavily by the cultural norms in which it is cultivated (Son et al. 2010). Accordingly, many Korean SEL interventions manifest the sociocultural characteristics unique to Korean society.

4 Trends in Social and Emotional Learning Research and Practice in Korea

4.1 *SEL Intervention Programs*

As discussed earlier, numerous nationwide countermeasures, including several SEL interventions, have been proposed to reduce the gap between academic and emotional adjustment of Korean youth. Unfortunately, the success of these measures has been negligible. The disappointing performance of early SEL-related intervention programs, mostly called character education programs or ethical education programs, was attributed to a number of factors (Shin 2011; Son and Lee 2009). Most of the existing programs, for instance, provide post hoc treatments rather than prevention—that is, post-incident counseling and monitoring after the problems are manifest in the youth’s behaviors. Existing interventions also stress the delivery of information about school violence and the teaching of coping strategies against school violence. In so doing, they are focusing on the phenomenon of school violence itself, but overlook the social, emotional, and developmental characteristics of students involved in school violence.

To better optimize the effectiveness of SEL interventions, more recent programs have been designed from ‘prevention’ and ‘promotion’ perspectives: ‘prevention’

of students from displaying the maladaptive and problematic behaviors and ‘promotion’ of students’ SECs and academic achievement (e.g., Do 2015; Jeong 2013; Kang et al. 2015; Kim et al. 2015; Son and Jeong 2014). To illustrate, contents of some SEL intervention programs in Korea are now discussed.

Contents of SEL Intervention Programs Many SEL interventions in Korea adopt two popular programs (Lee et al. 2010; Shin 2011, 2013; Son and Lee 2009): Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS; Kusche and Greenberg 1994) and Strong Kids: Grades 3–5 and Grades 6–8 (Merrell et al. 2007a, b). Other approaches include the Thinking-Feeling-Behaving (TFB, Vernon 2006) adopted by Lee (2012) and a related program by Hong and Park (2014) who incorporated a cooperative learning model into the CASEL framework. Other structured SEL intervention programs in Korea tend to combine one or more of the above programs, targeting K-12 populations (e.g., Han et al. 2010; Kang et al. 2015; Kim et al. 2015; Lee 2010; Lee et al. 2010, 2013; Shin 2013; Son et al. 2010). Table 2 presents some of the content in these programs.

Table 2 Contents of SEL intervention programs in Korea

Program	Target population	Original developer	Content ^a	Core SEL competence
PATHS	Preschool-Grade 12	Kusche and Greenberg (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing basic self-control skills 	Self-management
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating positive classroom climate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Learning effective self-monitoring skills – Managing negative feelings (e.g., rage, anger, and stress) 	Self-management; relationship skills
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional understanding 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Understanding basic emotions (e.g., happy, sad, angry) – Understanding complex emotional states (e.g., jealous, guilty, proud) – Understanding how feelings change 	Self-awareness
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional understanding 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recognizing feelings in oneself and in others – Understanding how one’s feelings and behavior affect other people – Making decisions regarding contextual issues in showing one’s feelings (or keeping them private) 	Self-awareness; social awareness; relationship skills; responsible decision-making

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Program	Target population	Original developer	Content ^a	Core SEL competence
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Understanding one’s relationships with peers – Caring for friends and building friendship 	Social awareness; relationship skills; responsible decision-making
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal problem-solving skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Resolving conflict (e.g., identifying problems, identifying feelings, generating alternative solutions, evaluating consequences, and selecting the best plan) 	Social awareness; relationship skills; responsible decision-making
Strong Kids I and II	Grades 3–5 and 6–8	Merrell et al. (2007a, b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding your feelings: part I & II 	Self-awareness; self-management
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with anger 	Self-management; relationship skills
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding other people’s feelings 	Social awareness; relationship skills
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear thinking: part I & II 	Self-awareness; self-management
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power of positive thinking 	Self-management; responsible decision-making
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solving people problems 	Relationship skills; responsible decision-making
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting go of stress 	Self-management

Note Contents represent authors’ reorganization of: (a) Table 1 in Lee (2010, p. 34); and (b) Table 1 and associated contents in Kim et al. (2015, p. 515)

^aTranslated into English in consultation with Kam et al. (2004) and Merrell (2010)

Most of the SEL intervention programs consist of ten to twenty sessions delivered by teachers (or by researchers who are the program developers). Intervention programs are carried out as part of the specific subject-matter lessons in regular classrooms or as part of extracurricular activities in school. Few programs take place outside school (e.g., Kim et al. 2011). Interestingly, the effectiveness of SEL intervention programs seems to depend on whether they are couched within a specific subject domain or from a more general perspective. Evidence suggests that, compared with domain-general interventions, domain-specific interventions yield somewhat greater benefit for participating students (e.g., Lee et al. 2013; Shin 2013).

Domain-General SEL Intervention Programs Researchers who take domain-general approaches aim at developing stand-alone SEL-based programs and curricula to be implemented in diverse settings, and even outside school. These domain-general programs tend to target younger populations such as children in preschool and lower elementary school grades. Unencumbered by the heavy load of academic work, younger children seem to be more receptive to SEL instruction. Researchers who design these programs also tend to be involved in the programs as instructors or assistants (Han et al. 2010; Kim et al. 2015; Son et al. 2010).

Building on well-established SEL frameworks such as PATHS, Strong Kids, and Non-Violence Conversation, Kim et al. (2015) designed an SEL intervention program to improve the SEL competence of fifth graders. Over a period of three months, homeroom teachers and two education experts engaged in eleven 40-min extracurricular classes to conduct the SEL intervention program. Participating students indicated that their social awareness and relationship skills were improved. However, they did not agree that there was improvement in self-awareness and self-management skills. Student ratings of the psychological sense of community (PSOC) improved significantly after the intervention, but only when all PSOC dimensions were examined together as a total score. Only two out of the four PSOC dimensions, ‘belonging’ and ‘influence’, were associated with a significant improvement after the SEL intervention. There was no significant gain on the other two PSOC dimensions, ‘fulfillment of needs’ and ‘shared connections.’ Other studies reporting on domain-general SEL approaches likewise document mixed success (e.g., Han et al. 2010; Lee et al. 2010).

Domain-Specific SEL Intervention Programs Programs that deliver SEL interventions within the context of specific subject classes tend to produce greater effects compared to domain-general interventions. Catalano et al. (2002) argued that SEL requires a long period of steady learning before any changes in students’ attitude and behavior become observable. These changes, they emphasized, are best drawn out of an integrated approach that addresses SEL within domain-specific curriculum practices. For example, teachers can help students become aware of their own feelings and learn how to express themselves as well as understand others’ emotions during a poetry lesson in literacy class, while teaching self-control and anger management skills can take place in the ethics class (Han et al. 2010; Son and Lee 2009). In such cases, the SEL interventions occur within and across many specific subject classes throughout the semester or the school year.

Indeed, these domain-specific SEL interventions are well suited to the current Korean school curriculum because it is difficult to offer SEL as an independent subject (Kim et al. 2015). Domain-specific implementation also reaches students more easily because SEL units are incorporated into a wide variety of subjects, spanning ethics, literacy, art, music, physical education, and special education, to name a few. Table 3 presents examples of domain-specific SEL intervention programs currently available or proposed in Korea. These approaches are not without their limitations, though. The most critical issue is that not all teachers at any given school are capable of incorporating SEL contents successfully into their

Table 3 Domain-specific SEL intervention programs in Korea

Domain	Target population/sample	SEL framework constituting the foundation	Domain-specific application	References
Moral education	Elementary school students	SEL framework constituting the foundation PATHS with Eastern virtues incorporated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning objectives: understanding the meaning of friends; learning positive interpersonal relationship skills Activities: brainstorming on the meaning of friends; group discussions about relationships and conflicts among friends; using traffic light cards to express students' ideas 	Lee and Chi (2010), pp. 390–392
Literacy	K-12	PATHS, Strong Kids, and York Town High School Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning objective: understanding a specific essay, novel, or poem Activities: reading a specific literary work and analyzing the social-emotional core competencies that the author(s) used for writing 	Kang et al. (2015), p. 145
Social studies	Sixth graders	PATHS and Strong Kids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning objective: understanding damage caused by natural disasters Activities: understanding victims' emotions; considering various ways of expressing attitudes and behaviors to help the victims 	Shin (2013), p. 108
	K-12	PATHS and SDM/SPS ^a with various decision-making models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning objective: identifying problems and generating alternative solutions in situations that involve interpersonal conflicts Activity: cooperating with others to find out solutions with emotional regulation 	Lee et al. (2013), p. 219
Special education	Fifth and sixth graders in inclusive classrooms	Cooperative learning model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning objectives: understanding various kinds of emotions; learning strategies to control one's feelings Activities: sharing one's own feelings; understanding others' feelings; recognizing differences; cooperating with others; devising solutions within a cooperative discussion learning model 	Hong and Park (2014), pp. 220–221
Physical education (dance)	Middle and high school students	Thinking-feeling-behaving (TFB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning objective: expressing one's inner feelings in dance Activities: communicating one's feelings to others with physical movements; seeking coordination between body and other things such as music, outfits, and instruments 	Lee (2012), pp. 402–403

Note Contents include both theoretical and conceptual models and actual intervention programs

^aSocial decision making/social problem solving (Elias and Butler 2005a, b)

subject-specific pedagogical practices (Kim et al. 2015), attesting to the need for teacher education in SEL instruction.

4.2 SEL Antecedents and Outcomes

Alongside SEL intervention research, Korean researchers have also investigated antecedents and outcomes of SEL. Antecedents of SEL have been discussed in terms of risk factors and protective factors. Both these are further demarcated into personal and environmental factors. Personal factors can be classified as affective-motivational factors and social-behavioral factors. Table 4 summarizes some of these major antecedents of social and emotional competence as identified in Korean research (Han and Kim 2011; Lee et al. 2011; Son and Lee 2009).

Similar to research into SEL antecedents, Korean research into SEL outcomes has investigated personal factors. Affective-motivational outcomes include self-awareness, self-control, autonomy, responsibility, self-reflection, altruism, self-efficacy, and positive emotions. Social-behavioral outcomes encompass various interpersonal competencies such as positive and prosocial interactions with others, communication skills, positive attitudes and adaptation toward school, and leadership (Kim et al. 2015; Lee et al. 2011). The relationship between SEL competencies and improvements in task performance, test scores, and grades have also been the subject of SEL research and practice in Korea (e.g., Kim and Yang 2013; Park and Jeong 2014; Shin 2011). From a cultural perspective, several investigators have examined whether SEL training results in a heightened sense of filial piety or

Table 4 Antecedents of SEL competence as reported in Korean SEL studies

Antecedent	Personal factors		Environmental factors
	Affective-motivational	Social-behavioral	
Risk factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Disposition ■ Biological factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Defiant attitude ■ Problematic behaviors from early childhood ■ Experience of drug use or delinquency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Experience of academic failures ■ Low expectation of parents, teachers, and peers ■ Violent behaviors of peers
Protective factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Resiliency ■ Emotional intelligence ■ Emotional regulation ■ Self-efficacy ■ Academic motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prosocial behaviors ■ Positive interpersonal skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social support

Note Contents represent a summary of Han and Kim (2011), Lee et al. (2011), and Son and Lee (2009)

decorum—two traditional Confucian values (e.g., Han et al. 2010; Kim 2015a). Notwithstanding research efforts summarized herein, research on the antecedents and consequences of SEL intervention in Korea is still in its nascent stage.

5 SEL and the Character Education Promotion Act

5.1 The Character Education Promotion Act

Korea implements a national curriculum at all levels of elementary and secondary school. Recognizing the increasing challenge emerging from adolescent social and emotional maladjustment in school, the Korean government has lately endorsed several programs in addition to its national curriculum. These are aimed at further promoting SEL in schools. Unfortunately, most of these programs have tended to be one shot or short term in nature, and thus limited in successfully resolving adolescents' social, emotional, and behavioral problems (Shin 2011; Son and Lee 2009). The Character Education Promotion Act, or CEPA (legislated in 2015), is a systematic long-term intervention in the national curriculum designed to ameliorate these problems and improve the SEL of Korean youngsters (Jang 2015; Kim 2015a).

The objective of CEPA is to promote the development of Korean students' character, to help them achieve success at school, and to become productive future citizens (Korean Ministry of Education 2015a). Character education is defined as "education that takes aim at cultivating one's inner self to grow into a sound and righteous individual and fostering the human character and competence necessary to cohabit with others, the community, and nature" (Korean Ministry of Education 2015a). The CEPA also stipulates what it considers 'core values and virtues' and 'core competence.' Core values and virtues refer to spiritual qualities such as: decorum, filial piety, honesty, responsibility, as well as respect and concern for, understanding of, and collaboration with others. Core competence refers to: the knowledge necessary to actively and voluntarily exercise and fulfill core values and virtues, and the ability to integrate empathetic communication skills and conflict resolution capability (Korean Ministry of Education 2015a).

Starting July 2015, all national and local governments, as well as K-12 schools, will be required to abide by CEPA. The Character Education Promotion Commission, established by the Korean government, has responsibility to issue, review, and update comprehensive guidelines for executing character education programs every five years. Mayors and governors of the seventeen major cities and provinces in Korea are required to lay out specific plans for CEPA's implementation consistent with national guidelines. Every elementary, middle, and high school are required to report annually to the superintendent of education on its implementation at school and classroom levels. Moreover, teachers are required to receive compulsory teacher training for character education. Teacher training institutions, such

as colleges of education and teaching, are obliged to offer courses that can help strengthen teacher competency in character education (Korean Ministry of Education 2015a, b).

5.2 Debate on Human Character as Nature or Nurture

Enactment of CEPA has prompted debate within Korean society regarding the appropriateness of such a legal measure to modify the so-called ‘human’ character. From the perspective of Confucianism, human nature is inherently good and, therefore, the purpose of character education should be to realize this naturally virtuous human state through persistent learning and practice (Kim and Kim 2012). There are concerns that the idea of nurturing human quality by way of legal means is fundamentally dangerous and non-educational, as it is founded upon a false premise that human nature is a subject of law and, by extension, under the control of government (Jang 2015; Kim 2015b). Scholars have also pointed out the incompatibility between human nature that is essentially enduring and law that is relatively short-lived (Cho 2015). Others have questioned the validity of measures that purport to capture one’s innate character (Chun 2015) or the ability and preparation of teachers to carry out the provisions of this law in their classrooms (Huh 2015).

Notwithstanding these criticisms, SEL researchers in Korea have argued that at the heart of CEPA lies the clear and specific goal of helping children improve the key social and emotional skills that lead to greater empathy and healthier communication (Jeong 2013; Son et al. 2010). According to them, it is in this sense that CEPA represents a necessary and welcome first step to resolving adolescent psychological and behavioral problems, such as depression, suicide, bullying, harassment, and delinquency at school (e.g., Kim 2015a). CEPA emphasizes the enhancement of student capabilities to understand others, express empathy, and engage in thoughtful communications and behaviors, all of which are the very competencies advocated in SEL interventions (Do 2015). Accordingly, SEL researchers suggest that classroom teachers and education-related authorities should embrace SEL as the conceptual framework that guides the design, application, and evaluation of character education programs (Do 2015; Kim 2015a). In so doing, instructors and practitioners of character education, now familiarized with SEL theory and practice, will be better able to enact CEPA in real classroom settings.

5.3 Future Directions: Other Issues Related to CEPA for Promoting SEL Core Competence

CEPA has been in effect for less than a year, and it is premature to draw any conclusions regarding its efficacy in easing adolescent problems in Korea.

However, as CEPA is rolled out, several issues will require attention. The first is the need for valid and reliable measurement and assessment methods for the evaluation of SEL intervention programs. The perception of ideal human character is different across nations, culture, religion, and theoretical tenet (Jeong 2013). As discussed earlier, the concept of human character is also elusive. Reaching consensus on its conceptual and operational definitions is formidable enough, let alone the specific subcomponents to be included in the assessment of student character (Chi et al. 2014). Do (2015) thus suggests the need to narrow down the relevant concepts of student character to students' SEC. In this regard, SEL instrumentation needs to be developed to appropriately evaluate the effectiveness of programs and the legislature of CEPA.

In fact, a number of investigators are currently developing such instrumentation. For example, Hyun et al. (2015) developed the KEDI Character Test. The instrument has undergone validation involving approximately 40,000 Korean students from 1184 elementary and secondary schools. The final instrument consists of seventy items classified into ten correlated constructs: self-respect; self-regulation; emotional and social intelligence; social responsibility; decorum; anger management; conscience; prudence; social justice; and citizenship.

The Character Index Instrument (Chi et al. 2014) is another instrument of potential relevance to SEL assessment. It is designed for elementary and secondary school students and consists of sixty items tapping seven dimensions across three subscales: (a) integrity, a sense of responsibility, and respect for law and order in the morality subscale; (b) empathy and social concern in the sociality subscale; and (c) positive self-regard and self-regulation in the emotion subscale. In developing this instrument, Chi et al. (2014) also considered the situational dimension spanning individual, interpersonal, and social levels and also the educational dimension encompassing knowledge, attitude, and behavior. These efforts demonstrate potentially fruitful directions for combining CEPA and SEL in future investigations.

Another issue of concern is how best to implement character education—or SEL interventions for that matter—such that participating students experience tangible benefit. It is the Korean government that enforces CEPA. However, it is the school principals, assistant principals, and classroom teachers who actually carry out character education programs for students. In this regard, enhanced opportunities for teachers to receive quality training on SEL instruction are critical.

Notably, however, the success of SEL intervention needs more than competent teachers. It also requires a close alliance between teachers, students, parents, and community (CASEL 2015). CEPA likewise recognizes that character education should take place under the active participation of, and mutual cooperation between, schools, families, and communities, with an eye toward students' long-term psychological well-being (Korean Ministry of Education 2015a).

6 Conclusion

It is only recently that SEL has begun to attract the attention of Korean educators and policy makers as a viable solution to adolescent problems. Clearly, more research is needed. However, thus far, findings have offered practical tips for designing effective SEL intervention (and character education) programs that can be implemented to promote SEC in and out of school for Korean youngsters. These promising findings underscore the role and relevance of SEL and SEC in the healthy development of Korean youth.

Acknowledgments This work was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea Grant funded by the Korean Government (NRF-2014S1A5B8060944).

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The Integration of Social and Emotional Learning and Traditional Knowledge Approaches to Learning and Education in the Pacific

Rosiana Lagi and Derrick Armstrong

Abstract Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the development and application of social and emotional knowledge and skills that promote a sense of self-worth and awareness that enable one to bond and interact openly and confidently with others. This chapter will draw upon studies of learning in the Pacific region to consider the extent to which teachers employ SEL perspectives, either explicitly or implicitly, in their classroom practice. We consider the value of integrating SEL theories and practices within a Traditional Knowledge Approach (TKA) framework. The evidence from studies in the Fiji Isles suggests that where integration of these approaches does take place, students tend to be more engaged with their learning. Moreover, there is evidence that teachers who adopt an integrated SEL/TKA approach into their classroom practice find that the purposeful use of TKA, informed by SEL theories, enable them to achieve better learning outcomes.

Keywords Social and emotional learning • Traditional knowledge approach • Pacific cultures and societies • Learning in indigenous communities

1 Introduction to SEL and the Traditional Knowledge Approach (TKA)

‘Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show

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empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions’ (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning; CASEL 2015). SEL is commonly described in the literature as comprising five core social and emotional competencies (SECs): self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; relationship skills; and responsible decision-making. It is argued that these competencies are vital for the development of good citizenship and more generally to positive engagement with society (CASEL 2015).

Some of the key roots of SEL lie in ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979) and the argument that human development takes place within a framework of interrelated social and cultural settings with the learner as agent. Schools are seen as a critical element of this matrix of interactions offering an opportunity—through engaging, challenging, and meaningful pedagogy—to promote the development and utilization of skills that are necessary for active social engagement and resilience in the face of adversity (Zinns et al. 2004). More recent research in this field has drawn on social justice perspectives to highlight the role of SEL approaches in schooling to support the voices and experiences of diverse and disadvantaged young people (MarYam and Darling-Hammond 2015). Less has been written in the mainstream SEL literature about indigenous communities. Yet, indigenous systems of knowledge and knowledge perspectives are central to the lives of young people in these communities and hence the relationship nexus between schooling and community merits attention in the literature.

In considering the role of SEL in indigenous communities and schools, we argue that there is value in considering SEL perspectives and approaches under the Traditional Knowledge Approach (TKA) (Bakalevu 2009; Liligeto 2009; Lima 2009). Indeed, both SEL and the TKA share an understanding of social and emotional learning as being centrally concerned with the idea of ‘relationship’. In the Pacific Island countries, for example, learning about relationships and ways of relating to others is essential for social inclusion and the development of empowering social contributions within the community (Thaman 2013). This chapter supports the position that communal learning in the TKA within the formal schooling context aligns well with key concepts and components in SEL. The chapter will also suggest that where a TKA is poorly implemented in formal schooling, and/or inadequately conceptualized or grounded within SEL and formal classroom pedagogies, its benefits will be limited.

2 Pacific Traditional Ways of Knowing

Traditional culture has great significance in the lives of Pacific children. This is reflected in the TKA, where social and emotional learning is understood to be lifelong: beginning at conception and continuing throughout life (Bakalevu 2009). Traditional ceremonies are held in communities to ensure social and emotional development. For example, when a child is born into an indigenous Fijian family,

for the first ten nights, the child is continuously nurtured by older women to ensure that the child does not cry and all their needs are met. During these ten nights, the women sing lullabies, chants, and recite stories and rhymes to the newborn. In this process, the child is introduced to the community and bonding with others in the community begins. Linguistic, inter- and intra-personal, musical and bodily kinaesthetic intelligence also begins from this early stage in the child's life. Another example is the *vakalutu buto ni gone*, the ceremonial burial of the child's umbilical cord. This ceremony is usually performed after the fourth night following birth. The child's umbilical cord is buried to ensure the child's relationship with their *vanua*. *Vanua* refers to the land, the sea, the cosmos, the people, all living things, and the spirits in a specific place and how each of them is related to and responsible for each other. *Vanua* also includes the culture, traditions, knowledge, skills and ways of knowing, love, peace, prosperity, and communalism (Lagi 2015).

In Pacific communities, 'relationship' is the key agent for socialization and human development. It is through relationships that children learn about their identity, roles, values, and appropriate actions. Socialization in Pacific communities is communal, and all community members are responsible for children's social and emotional learning. Elders, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, and peers are all involved in this capacity. Children develop their social and emotional intelligence by observing and imitating knowledgeable adults and also orally through practice with experts who provide the scaffolding through which they learn to themselves become experts (Nabobo-Baba 2006; Nabobo-Baba et al. 2012). Children's social and emotional intelligence is believed to develop more effectively when scaffolding and support is given to children as they practice what they are learning. For instance, when learning how to weave a mat, adults will demonstrate to children how to position themselves and how to position the pandanus leaves and weave them to the required design. While demonstrating, the expert will guide the child orally and through practice on the process. In doing so, the child develops communication, negotiation, goal setting, empathetic, and critical thinking skills.

Lagi (2015) uses the *Niu* metaphor to demonstrate human development in the indigenous Fijian community. She compares human development to a coconut tree. The coconut tree represents the child's resilience and sustenance to survive. The roots of the coconut tree represent the support given by elders, the TKA values and traditions that ground the child's learning. The trunk represents the continuous nurturing and support facilitated by parent and the *vanua*. The leaves represent the support and facilitation rendered by the school and other learning agents. The coconut represents a *yalomatua*—a wise child who is the outcome and a reflection of the support and nurturing given to them.

The Fijian saying '*ni lutu na niu e lutu ki vuna*' (when a coconut falls it does not fall far from its tree) often means that a child's attitude, values and character reflect the attitudes and values of their elders. For the elders, it is a directive that they must teach the child appropriate manners, values, knowledge, skills and attitudes so that the child does not *vakamadua* (embarrass) them by behaving inappropriately and therefore be labelled *sa ucui tamana/tinana* (just like her father or mother). When children perform exceptionally well, they are told *vinaka vakaniu* (as good as a

coconut—useful in every way). In formal education, teachers have a great responsibility in teaching students the appropriate knowledge and modelling about the proper ways of doing things since the teachers' attitudes, values, character and what they teach will also be reflected in their students' performance.

In Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu, for example, children learn orally through songs, proverbs, dances, storytelling, myths, and drama. They also learn through observation, imitation and practice of cultural activities, rituals, ceremonies and survival skills and knowledge. Knowledge and skills are passed down from one generation to another by older members of society including chiefs, elders, parents, and older siblings (Bakalevu 2009; Buatava 2009; Ene 2009; Hoala 2009; Liligeto 2009; Lima 2009; Mel 2001; Mokoroa 2009; Nabobo-Baba 2006; Taufe'ulungaki 2009; Teairo 2009). Learning in the Pacific traditional context is bi-directional, and through this children are able to develop competencies in understanding who they are and where they belong in society. In doing so, they are aware of people around them and so learn to communicate with and relate to people appropriately.

The Pacific child learns through practice knowledge and skills relevant for their survival in the environment in which they interact with others. Learning outside of the classroom is characterized by the child's interaction with an elder or a member of the community, relative or sibling, who is an expert in the knowledge or skill that is being taught. In Tokelau, 'the importance of group, and cooperative skills were identified as necessary for survival' (Kalolo 2002, p. 106). In Tonga, Thaman (2009, p. 69) has shown how 'education was informal (i.e. unorganized, worthwhile learning) aimed at the continuation of the social order and maintenance of the status quo...this type of education was provided within the *api* (household) and to some extent within the wider community of kinsfolk'. Learning through interaction allows the child to be competent in relationship skills. Through interaction with the knowledge expert, the child is able to develop relationships with the expert, empathize with the expert, set goals to be achieved, share roles that are to be performed by each of them, and make wise decisions on how to complete the task on time.

In Papua New Guinea, children are nurtured to master language, history, reasoning, argumentation, and negotiation skills. In addition, they learn values such as self-respect and respecting others. The parents, relatives, and members of the community mentor and scaffold the child in acquiring this knowledge and skill (Mel 2001). Children appreciate that the family and community are there to support them in learning. They learn to empathize with others and recognize the significance of others role in their own learning.

In the Solomon Islands, the main purpose of learning is cultural continuity and survival. Hence, children learn cultural wisdom, ideas, practices and processes, technological skills, traditional knowledge and skills, values, attitudes, and appropriate behaviours to be able to achieve this. Learning is communal and every member of the society is responsible for teaching the young (Hoala 2009; Liligeto 2009; Lima 2009).

Equally, in Fiji, the main purpose of education is to prepare children for life. Therefore, children are taught important values, attitudes, knowledge, skills, and traditions to practice daily for their survival. Knowledge holders and experts are responsible for passing on this knowledge and skills orally and through practice (Bakalevu 2009; Nabobo-Baba 2006). Children develop self-awareness, knowing what they are capable of and how to manage the use of their knowledge and skills in order for them to survive. They become aware of their relationship with others and how actions will affect them. Thus, they learn to make wise decisions so that they do not hurt other members of their society.

Mokoroa (2009) has described how in the Cook Islands, children learn traditional ecological knowledge of navigation, fishing, seafaring, planting, weaving, and food preservation for their daily survival. In the same way, in Kiribati, Teaero (2009) explained that the main purpose of education is survival. To ensure this, children are taught survival knowledge and skills such as land ownership, genealogy, weaving, house and canoe building, fishing, and navigation. Children also learn knowledge and skills that heighten leisure such as poetry, oratory, and dancing skills. Knowledge and skills are passed down by knowledge experts and older members of society. This practice enables children to be confident in them and be optimistic about the use of their skills and knowledge for their existence.

In Samoa, Buatava (2009) explained that the main agenda for education was cultural survival and continuity. Here, children learn knowledge and skills appropriate to gender. For girls, this entails weaving, tapa making, and caring. For boys, this involves canoe making, house building, and preparing the earth oven. The family and the village are the two main institutions responsible for teaching the young. Ene (2009) shared the same sentiment in regards to Tuvalu; their main agenda for education is for daily survival, and children are taught survival skills relative to gender; for instance, weaving for girls and how to cut toddy (a ritual to prepare a traditional drink) for boys. In both Samoa and Tuvalu, girls are taught by their mother and boys are taught by their father. Children learn about their gender roles and are aware of their place and role in society. In knowing these roles, they learn to cooperate with others and also learn to negotiate and seek assistance from others when help is needed.

In the Pacific, learning is not conducted individually; rather, it is conducted communally such that the cooperation of all of community members is vital for the successful learning and survival of a child.

Pacific people are not born with cultural knowledge and values. These are learned in their communities as they interact with their relatives, fellow kinsmen and their social and natural environments (Kamoe-Manuofetoa 2015, p. 159).

Cooperative skills are necessary for survival (Kalolo 2002). Unity is emphasized and interdependence is stressed (Teaero 2009). Children are socialized to learn effectively in the contexts of *veiwe'ani* (relatedness), *veirairaici* (looking out for others' needs), respect (expressed through various ways such as silence and humility), and knowing one's social space (Nabobo-Baba et al. 2012). All members of the village can instruct, advise or reprimand a child (Nabobo-Baba 2006). The *vanua*

experiences will always provide for someone to be around to ‘scaffold’ or to teach some knowledge, skill, or appropriate behaviour. The concept of learning in a TKA allows for social interaction that contributes to the learning of appropriate values that promote the development of the indigenous child’s social and emotional skills.

For Pacific people...each daily life event is seen through a lens of ethical values, mores and codes of conduct that have developed over many years...The indigenous knowledge of the Pacific incorporate technical insights and detailed observations of natural, social and spiritual phenomena, which in turn are used to validate what is important in life- what sustains people and what connects them to particular places and spaces and is crucial to their identity...In the Pacific communities, knowledge is communally made, sanctioned, shared and used with the aim of achieving the good life for all members – however this is defined (Plessis and Fairbairn-Dunlop 2009, pp. 110–111).

In summary, traditional Pacific ways of ‘knowing’ enhance SEL and SEC. SEL and its related competences are believed to be enhanced in situations where children receive a lot of support (Durlak et al. 2015; Humphrey 2013). In the Pacific, learning is communal and every member of society is responsible for making sure that children learn appropriate knowledge, skills, and behaviour to survive. Through scaffolding, children learn about fishing, planting, weaving, cooking, relationships, language, negotiation, reasoning, and conformity to customs. They also learn about their roles, responsibilities, appropriate behaviour, and values. Through learning these skills, knowledge and values, Pacific children develop socially and emotionally and acquire a sense of self and a sense of awareness of other members of their society including their respective and collective responsibility for the survival of their society—in alignment with the skills and values identified by CASEL (2015). Appropriate knowledge and skills are vital for their cultural continuity and their survival, and without this they will not become functional members of their society. Table 1 summarizes the curriculum context, content, SEL/SEC links, and pedagogy of traditional learning in the Pacific. Thus, it is evident that cultural continuity is seen as an element of SEL in the Pacific region—whereas this is not so much the case for SEL frameworks in Western Contexts (e.g., CASEL 2015).

3 *Vanua* as the Indigenous Fijian Learning Space

According to Nabobo-Baba (2008, p. 4), *vanua* ‘refers to that universal whole, which is inclusive of a chief or related chiefs, their people and their relationships, their land, spiritualities, knowledge systems, cultures and values’. Nabobo-Baba (2008) further notes that the *vanua* is essential for a Fijian as it is the essence of their identity and existence. For an indigenous Fijian child, the *vanua* is his or her classroom. This is where the child learns about the significance of self, identity, traditional kinship roles, and responsibilities to oneself, to one’s family, and to others. Moreover, cultural values such as respect for space (physical, social, and spiritual space) and survival knowledge and skills also form a significant aspect of

Table 1 Curriculum context, content, SEL/SEC links, and pedagogy of traditional learning in the Pacific

Pacific country	Context of learning	Content	SEL/SEC links	Pedagogy	Instructor
Tokelau	Village	Cooperative skills	Self-awareness Self-management Relationship skills Social awareness Responsible decision making	Oral, demonstration, song, dance, storytelling, drama	Group
Tonga	Village	Social order	Self-awareness Self-management Relationship Skills Responsible decision making	Myths, legends, dance, poetry, song, proverbs, rituals	Household, kinsfolk
Papua New Guinea	Village	Individual skills, language, history, relationships, reasoning, argumentation, negotiation, respect, moral values	Self-awareness Self-management Relationship skills Social awareness Responsible decision making	Observation, imitation, involvement in activities, mentoring, scaffolding	Parents, relatives, members of the community
Solomon Islands	Village	Knowledge, ideas, processes, values, attitudes, appropriate behaviour and wisdom	Self-awareness Self-management Social awareness Responsible decision making	Imitation, participation, tribal activities, oral tradition, contextual learning, community work	Chiefs, elders, parents, uncles, aunts, cousins and friends
Fiji	Village	Worthwhile values, attitudes, skills, conformity to customs and traditions	Self-awareness Self-management Social awareness Relationship skills Responsible decision making	Participation in tribal activities, oral tradition, contextual learning, ceremonies	Knowledge givers or repositories of wisdom, experts in their field, village members
Cook Islands	Village	Navigation, construction of seafaring canoes, wind and wave movement knowledge, weather and planting and fishing seasons, fishing skills, food preparation and preservation, craft (mats, hats, ropes, baskets), relationships	Self-awareness Self-management Relationship skills Social awareness Responsible decision making	Oral History, observation, imitation, practice	Experts

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Pacific country	Context of learning	Content	SEL/SEC links	Pedagogy	Instructor
Kiribati	Village	Conformity to cultural mores, values, land ownership, genealogy, weaving, house and canoe building, fishing and navigation	Self-awareness Self-management Social awareness Relationship skills Responsible decision making	Verbal, poetry, oration, dance	Clans, experts, elders
Samoa	Village Family	Appropriate behaviour, gender role (girls—weave fine mats, tapa and care for young; boys—prepare earth oven, canoe and house building)	Self-awareness Self-management Social awareness Relationship skills Responsible decision making	Oral, demonstration, community activities	Chiefs, community elders, grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, peers,
Tuvalu	Village	Gender roles (girls—weave mats; boys—cut toddy)	Self-awareness Self-management Social awareness Relationship skills Responsible decision making	Scaffolding	Experts, elders

this learning within the *vanua*. Children acquire these through songs, chants, dances, stories, and practice in rituals and performance of traditional roles. The following lullaby (that is also performed in dance) is one such example:

Drau ni uto bota toka
 Drau ni uto bota toka
 Lutu ki ra au sa ciqoma
 Lutu ki ra au sa ciqoma
 Sa wewe na vula sa wewe na vula
 Sa wewe
 Sa wewe

[This lullaby essentially pertains to the social role of the child. The first four lines state that when the breadfruit leaves turn brown, it will fall. Hence, it is the child's responsibility to 'catch' the leaves. The last three lines state that bread fruit leaves turn brown during the full moon; hence, children should be ready to 'catch' them at this time.]

When performing and dancing the lullaby, an expert and skilled adult scaffolds and then assesses the child's learning. In Pacific cultures, the child does not become an expert overnight; rather, this is achieved through continuous practice supported by the scaffolding of skills, knowledge, and assessment. A skilled adult is both mentor and assessor. Through scaffolding, the children learn about themselves and their roles and responsibilities for the *vanua*. In addition, through this learning, children are able to build relationships with skilled adults and also serve as role models for younger siblings. The various forms of learning that transpire within the *vanua* are also driven towards cultivating social and emotional knowledge and skills which are necessary aspects of living in a communal setting.

As Table 1 demonstrates, Pacific Island countries are broadly similar in their approaches to traditional knowledge, and traditional forms of learning. In modern terms, this can be understood as curriculum aims, context, content, pedagogy, and instructors. The aims of their respective curricula are the survival and sustainability of culture. The content of a school's curriculum is knowledge, values, and appropriate behaviours that are derived from the *vanua* (their environment) and taught orally through songs, dances, stories, and through modelling and practice by knowledgeable members of the community. Support by elders, experts, and the custodians of knowledge and skills are vital for effective learning and the development of social and emotional intelligence.

The core competencies of SEL (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) are produced while the Pacific child learns appropriate survival skills and knowledge. These core competencies are also developed through the use of appropriate traditional pedagogy. For instance, when Pacific children develop cooperative skills while learning about navigation or genealogy, they become aware of their ability to listen and cooperate with others (self-awareness). They also better appreciate their relationships with others and how to relate well with people they come in contact with (relationship skills); more so, they are able to manage their social skills so that they can achieve their goals (social awareness). While trying to achieve their goals, the child makes appropriate decisions (decision-making skills) in respect to future roles and responsibilities. The same competencies are achieved when a Pacific child learns about gender roles in relation to weaving or planting. In all these cases, Pacific children's learning aligns with the competencies under SEL (see Table 1).

Communal learning is a pedagogy commonly practiced in the Pacific in which observation, imitation, practice, and scaffolding are used to ensure effective learning. In these pedagogies, the core competencies of SEL are also developed. For instance, in learning through practice, the child develops a sense of self-awareness of the skills and knowledge being taught. The child also acknowledges and maintains a relationship with the person who is providing the scaffolding of the skills and knowledge practiced (relationship skills). In addition, through developing their relationship skills, the child empathizes with the teacher and this further ensures the acquisition of the skill/knowledge being taught.

4 Traditional Knowledge Approaches and Theories of Social and Emotional Learning

There are several educational theories that have similarities to the Traditional Knowledge Approach that is evident in the *vanua*. Indeed, these theories act as a lens through which we can better understand the relationship between the TKA and SEL. For example, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner and Evans 2000) shows how the child's environment is the child's classroom and every system in it affects the child's social and emotional development. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes social tools such as vernacular and scaffolding as significant instruments for SEL. These approaches are also reflected in the TKA in that traditional knowledge and skills are transmitted successfully through the mother tongue and with much support and scaffolding from the knowledgeable adult. In addition, Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory (Gardner 1993) aligns with the traditional knowledge and skills that children must acquire under the TKA in order to develop socially and emotionally, and to become productive and responsible members of society. Similar linkages can be seen between TKA and Thorndike's Social Intelligence Theory (Thorndike 1920) that focuses on the ability to empathize and interact prudently in society. For Goleman (1995, 1998), social awareness is having empathy and being receptive and understanding of the situation of others in ways that enable successful social interactions. The indigenous child learns to develop and control emotions through social interactions with their elders and members of their community. Through social interactions, the indigenous child also learns to build positive relationships.

4.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory

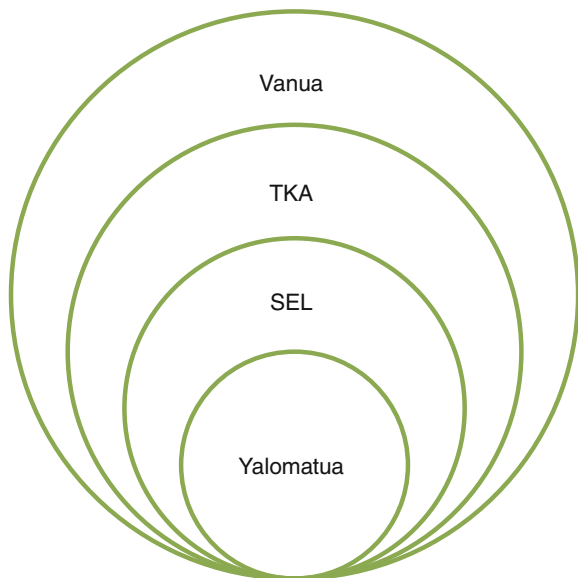
Bronfenbrenner and Evans (2000) highlight how individuals develop in a complex system (micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-system) of connections and contexts that are interrelated and influence development over time. Micro-systems are concerned with the interpersonal relations in a given setting and focus on the experience of the individual (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 22). This may include the social roles that individuals play, such as mother, brother, sister, and father or characteristics that are common to particular groups (i.e. gender, ethnicity, sexuality). These roles can and are learnt, and for many they are ingrained and re-enforced in interpersonal interactions. They can be culturally and socially defined and contain and relate not only to the content of the activity associated with the role but also to the relations between the two parties concerned (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The individual's micro-system is consistently shaped and re-structured within these encounters. Issues of norms and values and beliefs are installed through these processes. Meso-systems comprise 'the interrelationships between and among two or more settings in which a developing person actively participates' (Bronfenbrenner 1979,

p. 25). Thus, the meso-system would include the encounter between traditional knowledge and the formal school system. Meso-systems are critical environments that can have a major impact on the everyday sense of selfhood of young people. Exosystems refer ‘to one or more settings that do not involve the learner as an active participant’ (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 25). They include broader social and cultural norms that can be influential in shaping the child’s experience of the everyday. A macro-system ‘...refers to consistencies, in the form and content of lower order systems (micro, meso, and exo)...’ (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 26) and that exists at the level of any belief system or ideology in a given society. This is the ‘blueprint’ for social life and one that provides laws, rules regulations about the social norms and values of a given society. These can be ideological and ‘external’ yet they can have a significant part to play in shaping the exo- and meso-systems of the everyday (and therefore the types and quality of micro interactions).

Figure 1 summarizes how SEL develops within this framework and in relation to Fijian indigenous society. The figure also resembles Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory in that the *vanua* (the culture in which the child interacts) represents the Macro-system; the TKA (the systems and tools that scaffold the child in learning) represents the exo-system; the child’s social and emotional development is represented in the Meso-system; and *yalomatua* (the pinnacle and outcome of SEL in the child) represents the Micro-system.

Figure 1 also reflects the conceptual model of SEL created by Weissberg et al. (2015). Level 4 (the policies and support that promote SEL) is represented by the *vanua*, level 3 (synchronized classroom [discussed later in chapter], family, and community strategies that foster SEL) is represented by the TKA, level 2 (the short- and long-term attitudinal outcomes) is represented by the development of SEL, and

Fig. 1 SEL in indigenous ways of knowing



level 1 (the foundation to assist children to be successful in school and life) is represented by *yalomatua*.

In the indigenous Fijian's world, all living and non-living things are interrelated and contribute to the overall development of a child. For example, children learn by interacting with multidimensional, physical, social, cultural, and spiritual planes. The child, via interaction with these dimensions, learns skills and knowledge from their elders, parents, siblings, and members of their community. They learn from reading the changes in the land, the sea, and the cosmos. For example, indigenous children know that when they hear toads croaking, this is an indicator for rain; hence, when they hear the toads croak, they will prepare for the onset of rain by making sure firewood is placed in a dry area in the kitchen and all washing is taken off the clothes line (Lagi 2015). They learn that their spiritual connections with other people and their environment are intended to help them understand who they are and their place in their world. Through children's socialization with their environment, they learn to negotiate rules of engagement, respect, trust, and sharing of responsibilities. In turn, they develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship and decision-making skills which are core SEL competencies.

4.2 *Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory*

Vygotsky (1978) highlights the importance of cultural tools such as language in an individual's understanding of their world. Language is one of the most important cultural tools that a child has to understand the world in which they live. In the indigenous world, the vernacular language is a major tool for transmitting information and understanding the world. Knowledge in the indigenous world is transmitted through language in a variety of forms including songs, plays, dances, chants, and stories. Such cultural tools are also important for the maintenance of SEL through the development of social awareness and relationship skills.

Sociocultural theory also highlights the significant roles of adults in children's learning. This is similarly the case in the TKA. In indigenous Pacific societies, elders play a vital role in facilitating and helping children to know and practice their traditional roles. This enables them to use their traditional knowledge for their survival. The differences between the elders' knowledge and the children's knowledge create a 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky 1978). It is the role of the elders to bridge this knowledge gap and ensure that the child knows and applies knowledge effectively. It is during this process of learning and teaching that scaffolding takes place and children and the expert adult negotiate the task that has to be conducted, the roles to be undertaken by the both of them, and the time to be taken to complete the task. This form of interactional learning allows the child to learn how to cooperate, and how to develop self-awareness, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making skills.

4.3 Multiple Intelligence Theory

Learning in the indigenous child’s world can also be aligned with Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory (Gardner 1993). This framework highlights distinctive types of intelligence or ways of adapting to the environment that reflect the influence of society and culture. Linking Gardner’s theory to indigenous Fijians’ traditional roles is illuminating because these roles involve specific expert knowledge and skills along the lines of Gardner’s ideas.

Salient traditional Fijian roles include: *Turaga* (Chief), *SauTuraga* (Chief Executive), *Matanivanua* (Spokesperson), *Mataisau* (Craftsmen), *Bete* (Priest), *Gonedau* or *Tuirara* (Fisherfolk) and *Bati* (Warrior). These roles are clan-specific or clan-devised and must be performed with expertise by the members of the clan to ensure the smooth running of a village. The members of the clans are traditional experts, who learned from their elders through observation, imitation, experience, and through practice. Elders usually ensure that children are taught different roles and may be embarrassed when adults and children are not able to perform their roles as expected (Lagi 2015).

The different roles pertaining to indigenous Fijians and how they can be related to Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory are shown in Fig. 2.

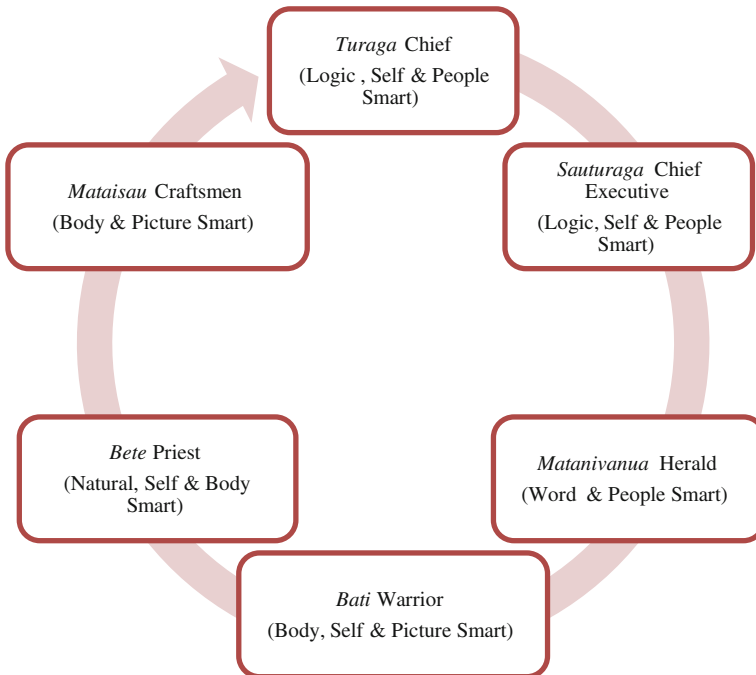


Fig. 2 Different roles pertaining to indigenous Fijians and how they can be related to Gardener’s Multiple Intelligence Theory (adapted from Lagi 2015)

As suggested by Lagi (2015), these traditional roles are linked to Linguistic Intelligence (word smart), Musical Intelligence (music smart), Intrapersonal Intelligence (self-smart), Interpersonal Intelligence (people smart), Naturalistic Intelligence (natural smart), Bodily Kinaesthetic Intelligence (body smart), Spatial Intelligence (picture smart), and Logical Intelligence (logic smart) (Gardner 1993). Gardner's Linguistic and Interpersonal Intelligence corresponds with the *Matanivanua* (Heralds) or spokesperson, who is usually an expert in language, adept in using linguistic skills and knowledgeable to effectively communicate with the chief and the members of a community. Intrapersonal and Naturalistic Intelligence are similar to the *Bete* or priests who are spiritual experts and whose skills enable them to commune with the spiritual world.

Bodily Kinaesthetic and Spatial Intelligence can be linked to the *Mataisau* or carpenter's role whose artistic and carpentry skills assist with the effective construction of houses in the village. Likewise, the *Bati* or warriors are endowed with combatant skills and knowledge which assist them in protecting the vanua. *Gonedau* (fisherfolks) are gifted with fishery skills which enable them to protect and manage marine resources. Logical Intelligence is comparable to the *Turaga* or chief and *Sau Turaga* or chief executive whose critical and logical thinking skills guide them when making important decisions for the smooth running of a village. It is through the learning and performance of traditional roles that indigenous children learn to be responsible citizens, understanding that if they do not perform their roles, this failure may lead to conflicts and chaos in the community. Children, when given responsibilities, learn to make wise decisions while considering the welfare of the members of their community (Lagi 2015).

Gardner's theory is also reflected in the Kiribati's Maneaba System as suggested by Whincup (2010), the Solomon Island's Big Man System and *fa'amanatanga* as described by Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo (2014), the Tongan's *Kainga* System as described by Thaman (1998), and the Samoan Matai System or *fa'asamoa*, as proposed by Odden (2007). In all cases, there are traditional experts for different vital survival skills and knowledge. They transfer this knowledge either verbally, through practice, or through modelling to indigenous children who have earned the right to be given the knowledge and/or skill.

These Pacific ways of knowing, or the TKA, highlight the significance of the elders and the custodians of knowledge in the transmission of vital knowledge and skills. In addition, the social interaction in the bi-directional learning process allows the development of social and emotional skills such as goal setting, making wise decisions, being considerate of others, respecting space, and relationships with others, behaving responsibly and appropriately, managing time, and negotiating dutifully so that they are able to achieve their goals in the successful completion of their roles. When examining a TKA using Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory (1993), SEL's core competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relational skills, and responsible decision-making are evident.

4.4 *Social and Emotional Intelligence Theories*

Social intelligence theory, according to Thorndike (1920), is having the ability to empathize and interact prudently in society. Similarly, emotional intelligence, according to Goleman (1995), is evident when individuals have the ability to control their emotions and build positive relationships. In the indigenous world, the child learns to develop and control emotions through social interactions with elders and members of their community. Through social interactions, the indigenous child learns to build positive relationships. Kinship is also valued in the indigenous child's world: 'Kinship is a key value that underlies the behavior of most indigenous Fijians' (Lagi 2015, p. 26). Understanding who they are related to and their responsibility to their relatives is very important. In the Vanua, *veirairaici* means looking out for others' needs (Nabobo-Baba et al. 2012, p. 251). Apart from this, other noble qualities include *yalomalua* (humility), *vakarokoroko* (deference), *veivukei* (helpful), *veinanumi* (consideration), *veilomani* (loving), *vakarorogo* (attentive and compliant), and *yalovata* (working together) (Lagi 2015, p. 70). These indigenous Fijian cultural values are taught to indigenous Fijian children through their daily interactions with their *vanua*. A child who emulates these values is praised, while the child that does not is shamed and the family and community reproached. Emotional Intelligence according to Goleman (1995, 1998) is evident where individuals have the ability to control their emotions and build positive relationships.

In addition, understanding the boundary in a relationship and its unwritten rules is also valuable in an indigenous child's world where: 'This role boundary seems to be akin to the Pan-Pacific notion of *vaa/wah* which refers to a physical as well as a metaphorical space that defines and sanctions inter-personal as well as inter-group relations' (Thaman 2009, p. 2). It is the responsibility of the mother to teach her children who they are related to and their roles and boundaries as relevant to these family members. A child disrespecting their relatives is scolded and reminded of the significance of kinship. When the child shows disrespect in public, the child's family and their village are held responsible for the child's misbehaviour. To ensure that the family or village is not shamed, everyone related to the child makes it their responsibility to teach the child appropriate behaviour towards others.

In short, an indigenous Fijian child develops social and emotional intelligence through interactions with his or her *vanua*. The TKA, aided by scaffolding and nurturing from experts, contributes to the development of a *yalomatua* wise child who is humble, considerate, respectful, empathetic, and able to implement values, skills, and knowledge for the benefit of the *vanua*. In the heart of the child is the *yalo* spirit/intuition that directs the child to make wise decisions. Wisdom develops as the *vanua* scaffolds the child and lets the child practice the knowledge, skills, and values taught.

5 Classroom Pedagogy in the Pacific and SEL

A study undertaken by Lagi (2015) explored the implementation of the TKA among indigenous children in Pacific Island schools. The findings confirmed that learning followed the TKA. Children and adults learned through observation, imitation, orally, and through practice. Support and scaffolding from members of the communities were vital for the successful performance of learners in schools and emphasized the importance of mutual support between schools and communities. Interestingly, data collection in formal learning contexts in the same communities found that group work was a pedagogy used by many teachers to help students to interact with each other, support each other, develop their confidence, and understand concepts better with the use of their vernacular. Teachers in Lagi's (2015) study used teaching strategies such as group discussion, group presentation, role play, skit, and drama. Unfortunately, however, a significant disjunction between the TKA and the formal school curriculum was also evident in the schools. For example, an average of only 10–20 min a day was allocated for these activities and the teacher only spent around 2–5 min per group, with students left to discuss and do the activities on their own in groups. Many teachers were concerned that group work was time-consuming, that there was a lack of space and resources, and that class sizes were too large for group work to be feasible (on average 35–50 students per class). Thus, most of the scaffolding was done by peers rather than by the teachers.

In addition, the same research carried out by Lagi (2015) found that some teachers do not use group work at all in their classroom pedagogy. In some cases, this was because they had no experience of using group work and lacked the skills to adopt it into their practice. One might have expected teachers to draw upon their own experiences of the TKA experiences of learning in the community in this respect, but discussions with teachers suggested that the disconnect between formal teaching approaches and TKA in the community would appear to be embedded in quite different spheres of experience. It was not simply that group pedagogical methods were absent from the training experience of these teachers, it was also the case that they had not experienced these approaches themselves as students in schools. This finding is consistent with the literature highlighting the important influence of teachers' own personal experiences of learning in formal classroom settings (Fang 1996; Lortie 1975; Schneider et al. 2013).

Notably, however, those teachers who did implement group work within a TKA framework reported that their students benefited emotionally and socially, that learning was more effective, and that students were more cooperative with others, and more task focused. Communication skills were seen as being effectively developed, alongside personal and interpersonal confidence, self-esteem, and empathy. Decision-making was seen as more informed and teachers believed their students to be more respectful of others, and to have enhanced negotiation skills and

intrinsic motivation. In these respects, there was strong consistency between the TKA and the social and emotional competencies developed within and by a SEL approach to learning.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that the experience of indigenous students in the Pacific demonstrates how social and emotional learning is inherent to indigenous knowledge systems and to the development of a *yalomatua* (wise indigenous child). In making this case, we drew upon established theories of learning and educational studies in the Pacific region to consider SEL factors in the educational process. We also considered the value of integrating SEL theories and practices within a Traditional Knowledge Approach (TKA) framework. Evidence suggested that where teachers adopted an integrated SEL/TKA approach into their classroom practice they were able to achieve better learning outcomes for their students. As Brofenbrenner (1979) has argued, the interrelationship between different ecological systems must be understood to gain a true sense of the nature of agency in social life. In this sense, the TKA in indigenous societies is critical to understanding how SEL takes place, how social and emotional competencies can be optimized, and how children can be socially and culturally empowered through the formal processes of education.

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Social and Emotional Learning and Indigenous Ideologies in Aotearoa New Zealand: A Biaxial Blend

Angus Hikairo Macfarlane, Sonja Macfarlane, James Graham and Te Hurinui Clarke

Abstract This chapter describes the fundamentals of social and emotional learning (SEL) and its benefits within educational contexts. An argument is presented for the visibility and centrality of SEL imperatives in education policies, the curricula and teaching pedagogies given that they collectively assume an integral and interconnected role in the promotion of student well-being and achievement. The chapter then explores the notion that there is a complementary dimension of SEL—one that sees SEL imperatives through an Indigenous lens. It is argued that this lens enables teachers to attain a clearer vision of their students’ cultural identities and ultimately become more attuned to the way their cultural interactions are able to be played out within learning contexts. The concept of *manaakitanga*—one that comes from within a Māori worldview and has resonance with CASEL’s SEL core competencies—is then introduced. The literal meaning of *manaakitanga* is ‘to care’, and in order to illustrate the connection between SEL core competencies and Indigenous phenomenology, a case study of an exemplary teacher of Māori students is narrated.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Māori · Indigenous · Diversity · Sociocultural · Potential · Manaakitanga

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1 Introduction

Social and emotional learning (SEL) for all students is embedded in a world of diverse human communities and their structures, often described by science and sociology scholars as becoming increasingly intricate and complex. Such complexity contrasts with earlier times when the passing of knowledge, skills and attitudes down through the generations was relatively less complex. Learning and teaching were mainly informal and based on observation and imitation. Students would watch and eventually engage, learning to do what people had done before (Lawton and Gordon 2002). In Indigenous societies, learning was oral and knowledge was retained by way of collective storytelling and rote recitation while engaging in set divisions of gender- and age-related tasks. In Māori society¹ (Māori being the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand), this is referred to as ‘taonga tuku iho’, literally meaning ‘treasures handed down’, where such experiences for Māori manifest as stories, values, genealogies and history; all attesting to oral traditions steeped in SEL. For this reason, SEL has resonance with Māori learning and teaching approaches and can claim a discerning place in the provision of culturally responsive education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The complexities and intricacies of diverse communities in today’s society are reflected in the fullness and fast pace of life. Added to this is the rapid rate by which knowledge is increasingly expanding and being compartmentalised, with specialists occupying or dominating certain fields. Further, today’s education settings are increasingly multicultural and populated with young people who require teachers with integral pedagogical skills that enable students to learn socially and emotionally for sound physical and cognitive functioning. Early childhood centres and schools are central to their students’ social and emotional development and well-being, especially as they transition from one learning context to another throughout their school years. Further, the expansive positioning of preventive SEL interventions globally signals the fundamental role of schools in addressing the mental health needs of students (and their families) (Heys 2011; Wigelsworth et al. 2013). Although some interventions provide targeted provision for students needing explicit support, they characteristically utilise a ‘universal’ delivery model that is for all students, regardless of any specific need. Such a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach does not meet the diverse learning needs of all students and adds another dimension to the proposition that teaching, and education in general, is becoming more challenging. This cannot be understated. As demands upon teachers’ time and

¹Māori comprises approximately 15% of the total population of Aotearoa New Zealand, but close to 24% of enrolments in schools (Education Counts 2015). Endeavours to improve the social, economic and political disparities that exist in Aotearoa New Zealand between Māori and non-Māori have been ongoing. While disparities are also reflected in educational outcomes, more recently, Māori achievement rates have followed an upward trend with an increasingly higher proportion of Māori learners participating in Early Childhood Education through to Tertiary (Campbell 2016).

energy increase and their work becomes more arduous, the need for them to reflect upon their practice becomes more urgent if they are to survive and thrive.

Within such a milieu, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) proposes that it is the students' social and emotional learning (SEL) that provides a foundation for safe and positive learning and enhances their ability to succeed in school, careers and life. SEL programmes are currently being implemented in many different settings (see CASEL www.casel.org), with effective programmes involving coordinated classrooms, school-wide implementation, family support and community practices that help students develop the five SEL key skills or core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Further, Durlak et al. (2010) contended that schools and classrooms are the primary places where students learn social and emotional skills and that an effective SEL programme should incorporate four elements, represented by the acronym SAFE: sequenced, active, focused and explicit.

In exploring SEL programming, this chapter highlights interventions that have drawn from the richness of Māori culture in order to create responsive practices that inherently reflect elements of SEL and develops an understanding of how SEL was an intrinsic part of Māori cultural traditions of the past that have a real place in the intricate and demanding learning settings of today's diverse world.

2 Looking Back

The development of SEL for Māori is not a new phenomenon. Māori stories, values, genealogy and history attest to oral traditions steeped in social and emotional imperatives. The education system has attempted to address Māori needs and aspirations since the beginning of state schooling for Māori, with the early mission schools and the native schools that followed serving state assimilatory interests for Māori until their abolishment in 1969 (Simon and Smith 2001). Throughout this period, state efforts to address Māori aspirations were overtly and consistently guided by non-Māori notions of what counts as knowledge and how it should be taught and evaluated (Harris 2008). Consequently, jumping forward to the twenty-first century, 175 years of colonising mechanisms have safeguarded the placement of Western frameworks in curricular and pedagogical practices and assessment methods, as the exclusive way of interpreting and making sense of the 'real' world (May 2004; Smith 1991; Walker 1973). This was at the expense of Māori aspirations and visions for education and severely compromised the social and emotional development of Māori students.

Such a reality appears to be of minor importance when Aotearoa New Zealand has earned an international reputation for excellence in education and consistently scores within the top four Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries on various academic measures. However, Māori students have constantly endured educational inequalities and injustice. In 2006, the

polarised achievement of Aotearoa New Zealand students was highlighted in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) study. Despite indicating high levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy for Aotearoa New Zealand students overall (above the OECD mean), further analysis of the data indicated that Māori students were well below this mean (Telford and Caygill 2007). This difference has become euphemistically described as the long ‘tail’ of disparity (Airini et al. 2007; Hattie 2003).

SEL for Māori students is clearly challenged when, in recent engagement and achievement data, many Māori students, particularly Māori boys in years 9 and 10, felt disengaged from the education system, were vulnerable to not reaching their potential and left school early. Māori students were three times more likely to be stood down, suspended, excluded or expelled than were their non-Māori peers, and four times more likely to be frequent truants (Ministry of Education 2011). Why is this still happening after 175 years? Could the continued disparity be explained (in part) by a systemic failure to redress or respond to the gap between the theoretical statements and teaching practice? Further, what is the role of SEL in this?

3 The Shifting Terrain on the Educational Landscape

Reflecting on the last half-century of Māori education, what is clear is that there has been a definite shift in thinking and doing, sometimes moderate and sometimes significant. Nonetheless, mind shifts have contributed towards transformative educational repositioning (Macfarlane 2015), allowing Māori constructs associated with SEL, such as the Hikairo Rationale (Macfarlane 1997, 2007) and the Te Whare Tapa Whā model (Durie 1994, 1997, 2003, 2011) (discussed below) to re-enter the parameters of our nation’s education system.

This ideological change has also been premised on a genuine willingness on the part of many teachers, principals, academics and policy-makers to challenge their assumptions and to revise their contentions around things cultural. Taking this pathway has prompted these professionals to view the world through alternative lenses to see and feel what others see and feel. This has the potential to generate awareness and understandings that recognise the taxonomies of conventional or Western knowledge, and Indigenous epistemologies. Key trends looking forward, though, would decree that the repositioning referred to above needs to extend into the next 50 years in order that ongoing culturally responsive systems of learning, teaching, programme planning, assessment, implementation and evaluation remain culturally compatible for Māori, and indeed for all learners. Macfarlane (2015) proposed that ‘when such shifts transpire, rediscovery and reclaiming ensue’ (p. 189), and Māori students can experience SEL for life success.

A response by the government has been the introduction of a national strategy to raise Māori achievement. *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success* (Ministry of Education 2008) and the sequel, *Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success* (Ministry of Education 2013), have been welcome responses to the clarion call from school and community

leaders for purposeful directives that focus on specific areas of teaching and learning that are clearly laid out. *Ka Hikitia* has challenged the education sector to work with greater urgency in order to make a positive difference for Māori learners. These strategies acknowledge the fact that inequitable education outcomes for Māori have persisted for too many years and that addressing these disparities is now a priority for all those involved in education. When teachers have a knowledge of, and empathy for, students' identity, language and worldview, and introduce content and contexts that include cultural perspectives, they are more likely to provide an environment that is conducive to SEL and consequently to successfully motivate Māori students. In principle, *Ka Hikitia* clearly resonates with ideals of what counts as relevant for Māori through championing Māori language, identity and culture; knowing, respecting and valuing who students are, where they come from and building on what they bring with them to the learning setting. *Ka Hikitia* undoubtedly aligns with nurturing the principles that frame SEL. It is a progressive strategy that has changed attitudes and forced a paradigm shift from a position previously steeped in deficit theorising of Māori learners to a position of agency that targets potential and opportunity (Macfarlane 2015).

4 A Sociocultural Approach to Social and Emotional Learning

Some Aotearoa New Zealand researchers (see Glynn and McNaughton 2002; Macfarlane et al. 2015, 2016; Savage et al. 2014) proposed that sociocultural theory underpins the location of pedagogical practices for learning (including SEL) within the wider social and cultural context.

The process in which the learner and teacher are engaged will vary according to the social and cultural context in which co-construction of knowledge takes place, and the backgrounds of the people taking part. Given that students' learning processes have roots and beginnings that trace back into the world of their whānau (extended family) and cultural histories, the claim that learning is not totally influenced by what transpires in classrooms alone takes on another level of meaning. Consequently, teachers need to be cognisant of their students' cultural identities and be highly attuned to the nature of their cultural interactions (Groundwater-Smith et al. 2007). The sociocultural context can then become authentic.

On the topic of authenticity, noted North American thinkers Castagno and Brayboy (2008) have asserted that teachers require authentic learning connections with, and knowledge of, Indigenous communities and worldviews if they are to develop culturally responsive pedagogies, especially for students' SEL. This is in tandem with Indigenous thinkers from Aotearoa New Zealand. For example, Tomlins-Jahnke and Graham (2014) described the implementation of a tribally based curriculum schema that is relationship centred for productive partnerships

that incorporate SEL—guided by a Māori worldview. This schema has succeeded largely on account of closer relations between learning contexts and Māori iwi (tribes) and Māori whānau. The initiative demonstrated by this tribe, located on the east coast of the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, is a case in point where local notions of what counts have been conceptualised and applied as a cultural framework aimed at Māori advancement in education. The tribe has utilised Māori thought processes and intangible features, including the social dimension (whanaungatanga) and the emotional dimension (te whatumanawa), among other cultural constructs, to nurture the learning process and, ultimately, the well-being and quality of life that are bound to SEL.

In another example, SEL for Māori students is authentically captured in the Hikairo Rationale (Macfarlane 1997, 2007), an inspirational Kaupapa Māori approach (an approach that reflects Māori ways of knowing, being and doing) for educators across the sectors to embed Māori practices within learning contexts. It is appropriate for working with both Māori and non-Māori students and teachers, even though its guiding values and metaphors come from within a Māori worldview. In addition, it is closely aligned with CASEL's SEL core competencies: self-management, social awareness, self-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making through the integrating elements that are interconnected with the rākau (tree), a sign of strength and life:

- Huakina Mai: the branches (*opening doorways*);
- I Runga i te Manaaki: the tree trunk (*caring that pervades*);
- Kotahitanga (*seeking collaboration—linking home and school*);
- Āwhinatia (*helping learners—moving towards restorative practice*);
- Ihi (*being assertive*);
- Rangatiratanga (*motivating learners*); and
- Orangatanga: the foundational roots, the place of standing (*nurturing environment*).

It is through the teacher's knowing, being and doing of the values and practices inherent in these elements that their Māori, and indeed all, students are free to grow in their SEL.

5 Māori Constructs for Supporting Social and Emotional Learning

Culturally responsive pedagogy requires teachers to approach the practice of teaching as a moral craft—an approach that effectively entails the heart, head and hand (Sergiovanni 1994). The heart is about adopting a philosophy that incorporates beliefs and values that are socially and emotionally grounded. The head involves personal or cognitive theory. The hand is about practices—the skills, strategies and decisions that are planned or spontaneous.

Sergiovanni's (1994) belief about teaching as a moral craft echoes within classroom programmes that are premised on SEL. Further, Catalano et al. (2004) highlighted the evidence that successful programmes for children and young people provide 'structure and consistency in program delivery' (p. 114) based around the following 'SAFE' practices:

- *sequenced*—the application of a planned set of activities to develop skills sequentially in a step-by-step approach;
- *active*—the use of active forms of learning such as role play;
- *focused*—the devotion of sufficient time exclusively to the development of social and emotional skills; and
- *explicit*—the targeting of specific social and emotional skills.

In addition, culturally responsive SAFE pedagogical practitioners are premised on creating a 'culture of care' and warmth in the classroom—one that accepts each classroom member (including the teacher) and their strengths, so that they feel a valued member of the group (*whānau*) and contribute to the individual's and collective well-being. Creating a culture of care requires implementing '*manaakitanga*'—a central concept that permeates throughout the Māori world.

Manaakitanga is the essence of showing respect or kindness (Williams 1971); it concerns hosting people and being hospitable with a caring, respect and kindness for others (Ritchie 1992). Endorsing this view, Barlow (1991) explained the purpose of *manaakitanga* is to remind the host people to be kind to visitors to the *marae* (Māori community setting). Barlow further states, '... the most important attributes for the hosts are to provide an abundance of food, a place to rest, and to speak nicely to visitors so that peace prevails during the gathering' (p. 63). For Ritchie (1992), *manaakitanga* is reciprocal and unqualified caring. Regarding reciprocity, '... there is simply faith that one day that, which one has contributed, will be returned' (p. 75) and that '... you are obliged to support, to care for, be concerned about, to feed, shelter and nurture your kin, and especially when they are in need ... This is obligatory' (p. 78).

Manaakitanga can have several interpretations in the education domain. First, teachers need a range of strategies to promote the caring process in the classroom (the metaphor of providing an abundance of food). Second, classrooms need to be culturally safe environments (the metaphor of providing a peaceful place). Third, sound intercultural communication must prevail in the classroom (the metaphor of speaking nicely). Fourth, *manaakitanga* is obligatory and has reciprocal ramifications, suggesting that teachers and learners who value others will be valued in return (the metaphor of receiving back what one has contributed).

Teachers who practise *manaakitanga* include the heart, through caring for students and colleagues, and the head, through reflecting on their own personal and professional roles. *Manaakitanga*, therefore, extends beyond merely responding to others' physical needs to caring for their psychological and spiritual domains. Consequently, expressing *manaakitanga* will include both overt and covert

expressions of care towards others that will foster their sense of belonging. This is about compassion, which, in itself, has deep ties to SEL.

Manaakitanga, in part, exemplifies culturally responsive pedagogy and enables Māori students to feel secure with their own identities in school (Macfarlane et al. 2007, 2008). This can be effected when making learning experiences more personally meaningful for Māori students; engaging them in activities related to their interests and experiences outside of school; using authentic materials and iconography; including relevant content in culturally familiar social contexts; and promoting stronger school, parent and community connections for involvement in learning (Au 1998).

The following case study illustrates the concept of manaakitanga within a culturally responsive classroom. It reports on an award-winning, semi-retired Māori teacher, Hera Kelly (not her real name), and how her attention to SEL attributes contributed to her effectiveness as a classroom teacher on the one hand, and the learning and behaviour of the students on the other.

6 Case Study: SEL and Its Meaningfulness for Young Māori Students²

The setting is a primary school in a provincial town in Aotearoa New Zealand. One of the authors of this chapter was alerted to the exceptional skills of this teacher and sought permission to undertake a four-month research project which entailed visiting the site one or two mornings per week over that period of time.

The research protocols (interviews and observations) were complemented by frequently using field notes to provide more in-depth background and to clarify classroom activities and interactions. The field notes contained descriptions of what was being observed and stated, the date and time of the observations were recorded, and everything worth noting was included. The use of technological tools, such as audio recorder and video camera, made the collection of field notes more efficient and the notes themselves more comprehensive. Macfarlane (2004, pp. 27–28) reported that, for the case study, the types of information sources included:

- The setting: the physical environment within which the programme took place; this included space and objects in the environment;
- The human and social environment: the ways in which people involved in the programme interacted and behaved towards each other, including the perceptions of whānau and significant others that were also important;
- Programme implementation activities: what happened in the programme, what those involved actually did and how resourcing was allocated;

²This case study was previously presented in Macfarlane (2004). Modifications have been made to contextual information, and participant names have been changed.

- The vernacular of the programme: different organisations have their own language or jargon to describe the encounters they experience in their work and, hence, capturing the vernacular was an important way to record how people in the programme understood their experiences; and
- Communication: verbal and non-verbal cues about what happened in the programme, and the way people presented themselves, expressed their opinions and shared their feelings.

The students ($n = 12$) on the programme were in an Enrichment Class that was supported financially by the local tribe. The children had been identified as having learning and behaviour difficulties and were withdrawn from their regular classrooms to attend the Enrichment Class for three morning sessions each week, for a minimum period of two school terms (approximately 5–6 months) and a maximum of a full year. The morning sessions were for an intensive 1.5 hours. The children were tutored in a wānanga (a place for Māori learning)-type classroom. Two paraprofessionals (Māori women from the local community) worked with individual children, while Hera Kelly attended to the larger group. This group worked on the mat initially, moving to tables after Hera was satisfied that a reasonable level of readiness (for understanding the concepts being taught) had been attained.

In the early stages of the research, links were made between the pedagogy of the Enrichment Class and the recognised literature on good classroom management. The classroom had a busy ‘tone’ to it. Kelly’s approach was very much in line with Kounin’s (1977) central focus of classroom management. She was organised, and each lesson was presented with precision, clarity and vitality. Room management provided for movement to ‘work the crowd’ (Jones 1987; Macfarlane 2007) and allowed for attention to be given to all students simultaneously. Kelly’s trait of ‘withitness’ (Kounin 1977) enabled her to know what was going on in all parts of the classroom at all times. The classroom was bright: rules of the classroom were displayed, as were examples of children’s work, awards, reminders of tasks to do, class timetables and pictures promoting the bicultural nature of the local tribal region. Māori translations of key concepts and words were evident on walls, tables and charts. The room had a ‘texture’ which incorporated real sight, sound, smell and taste. Importantly, the students seemed to delight in being there, in the presence of a skilled practitioner, who valued each of them for simply being who they were. Children reputed to have behaviour problems did not misbehave. Most were said to have learning difficulties at the outset, yet, in this environment, they were motivated to achieve better and records of their progress attested to that. The so-called withdrawn children became vocal contributors, and impulsive children seemed more in control of themselves.

Hera Kelly had a rich store of situated knowledge, both of the Aotearoa New Zealand national curriculum and of te reo Māori (Indigenous language) and tikanga Māori (Indigenous values). She was at the cutting edge of knowing and learning about curriculum content, classroom and social processes, academic tasks and students’ understandings. Her teaching style manifested the principles inherent in Ysseldyke and Christensen’s (1998) Instructional Management Approach (see also

Kounin 1977) and in the values and principles that guided teacher practices at a school in the Waikato region of the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand (Macfarlane 2015). Kelly's lessons had good momentum in getting the students to attend to the tasks in hand, getting on with it, getting on with them (building and maintaining relationships) and getting closure before a smooth transition to the next activity was executed (Smith and Laslett 1993). Her demeanour had a powerful influence on her students' learning and behaviour, her posture displaying confidence and suggesting leadership, enthusiasm, enjoyment and appreciation of the content of the learning experiences and of the context in which this was taking place. The children respected Hera Kelly's assertive, no-nonsense approach. Their engagement in learning and the delight they showed in 'being around her' created opportunities for their teacher to smile warmly, a trait identified by Pierce (cited in Macfarlane 2007) as simple yet significant in terms of building trust between learner and teacher.

Group alerting or systems for gaining attention and clarifying expectations played an important part in Kelly's approach. Her tactics included uses of body language to help students pay attention and stay on task. Kelly was often observed using non-verbal behaviour management strategies, such as eye contact, physical proximity, conversational pause, facial expressions and gestures in classroom interactions with students.

An excerpt from a national newspaper (Lose 2000) captured something of Kelly's teaching style. Headed 'Hera lives for teaching', the article paid tribute to her receiving a National Education Service Award. The newspaper report quoted Kelly: 'There is nothing like teaching a child to read and write ... money can't buy the joy you get from seeing the glint in the youngster's eye when they make out their first words ... but there is one ingredient for educational success—*aroha*' ('*aroha*' literally translates as 'love' and resonates with social and emotional affection).

When asked about her initial involvement with the Enrichment Class, it was clear that Kelly's intention was to make a difference to the learning experiences and achievements of the children. She declared that, given the stage she was at in her career, she wanted to 'give something back to the profession' (Lose, p. 12). Hera Kelly was adamant that her pedagogical approach responded to the special learning needs of the children, through positive relationships and classroom climate. A core element was instilling in the students a pride in themselves, a belief in themselves and a realisation on their part that to be Māori was a reality to be celebrated. Kelly expressed great concern about the inability of many teachers to develop an awareness of children's ethnic socialisation, and how this socialisation affects how children think, feel and act (Phinney and Rotheram 1987).

Hera Kelly modelled the behaviour and values she desired from her students. During conversations, she talked about the bonding she was able to create with her students and former students. She talked about a 'belonging', as opposed to the 'wall':

Over many years I have been both rapt and frustrated. I am rapt when I see really good teaching of Māori students and frustrated when teachers put this wall up between them and their students ... especially non-Māori teachers with Māori students ... worried about subject rather than student. Don't get me wrong, the content of my class presentations is important ... absolutely, but the mana (identity) and self-affirming of the children comes first. I love being there. Better still, the kids know I love being there (Macfarlane 2004, p. 30).

Hilty (cited in Franklin 1998) asked, 'What has love got to do with it? All teachers love children, right?' For many teachers, this is true—up to a point. The day-to-day challenge of teaching children with special education needs might be exciting but for teachers like Hera Kelly, it is *aroha* (love) that keeps giving them hope, socially and emotionally. More importantly, for many students, this bonding with a particular teacher may mark their first and most significant positive interaction in a school setting. Hilty also contends that while love and a sense of mission are seldom discussed in conjunction with school failure, they seem to play a role in the lives of teachers who elect to teach children who are 'dismissed', figuratively and literally, from many schools. Love and care—in Māori terminology, *aroha*—initiates a dialogue between the teacher and the learner that lays the foundation for a successful and reciprocal teaching and learning experience where SEL is given space to flow.

7 Looking Forward: Take-Outs from SEL-Related Case Study Findings

We turn now to a discussion about the case study, how it exemplifies the dedication shown by Hera Kelly and, as Durlak (2016) asserts, how appropriate professional learning and development, astute leadership and a high level of dedication from teachers will improve the likelihood of effective implementation when assessing the impact of a SEL intervention. The case study divulged a number of characteristics of the lead teacher, Hera, who was committed, had the relevant and appropriate training, and demonstrated exemplary Māori leadership. Consequently, after a period of intervention, students from the Enrichment Class were identified as being engaged in their learning, were socially and emotionally at ease with themselves and around others and were excitedly positive about their schooling.

In a different vein, Weissberg et al. (cited in Durlak 2015) alluded to CASEL's intentional inclusion of the word 'learning' within the concept of SEL as a means of reinforcing the notion that acquisition of SEL's five competency domain skills involves a series of actions that can be authentically contextualised in schools. Further, effective SEL programme approaches will usually combine the four elements embodied by 'SAFE' practices (Humphrey et al. 2013).

SEL theory strongly resonates with the teaching style of Hera Kelly, which reflected the principles inherent in the Instructional Management Approach (Kounin 1977; Ysseldyke and Christensen 1998) and in the Hikairo Rationale

(Macfarlane 1997, 2007). As the case study highlighted, Hera's teaching demonstrated impetus in: gaining the students' attention to learning tasks in an orderly fashion based on readiness level; getting on with tasks by means of multiple methods; nurturing and sustaining relationships with all students; and task mastery for a smooth progression to subsequent tasks and activities. Hera would require students who were initially working on the mat to move to their desks when she was satisfied they had reached an acceptable level of readiness (Macfarlane 2004).

The case study also highlights the distinctiveness of cultural nuances, such as preferred learning styles, body language, facial expression and voice projection, and their potential to affect the processes in assisting students to make meaning of their realities for relating to self and others. It is these very nuances that corroborate Māori values instrumental to the teaching and learning context that Hera Kelly had created. Thus, the importance of SEL to educational achievement is inherent to Māori ways of knowing today, just as it was hundreds of years ago where mindfulness ways were exemplified by the decisive and deliberate act of engaging with one's own lived experiences in natural surroundings as Māori, and becoming 'as one' with these surroundings. This interface of multiple dimensions links with Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model (Durie 1994, 1997, 2003, 2011), which is found on a holistic approach to achieving quality of life and well-being. Its application within educational contexts today supports SEL through alignment between SEL competencies and Te Whare Tapa Whā's four [Māori] pillars of social and emotional well-being:

- Taha Wairua—engaging with the spiritual dimension and supporting one's *self-management*;
- Taha Hinengaro—nurturing personal empowerment and building a greater sense of self-esteem, resilience, *self-awareness and responsible decision-making*;
- Taha Tinana—engaging in physical behaviours that nurture personal and collective safety, and *social awareness*; and
- Taha Whānau—developing and implementing healthy relationships that foster sound *relationships skills*.

In conceptualising SEL, Humphrey (2013) referred to the idea of school-based promotion and prevention where ultimately SEL aims to prevent negative outcomes and promote positive competencies across education, meanwhile being cognisant of a number of dimensions, including moral and character education, developmental psychology, mental health and notions of well-being. Interpretations of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie 1994) align unambiguously with what Humphrey (2013) considered a consequence of SEL: 'mental health and the broader notion of wellbeing' (p. 29). That is, when applying the Te Whare Tapa Whā model in an educational context, a change in the state of equilibrium of the 'whare' will occur if weaknesses in one or more of the pillars are present. This concurs with Denham and Brown (2010) who suggested that a failure to meet developmental milestones across the domains of intrapersonal and interpersonal competence has the potential to increase the risks related to psychopathological presentations. This could be interpreted to

mean that a weak ‘whare’, as perceived by Durie, can potentially lead to disengagement in learning or ‘poor health’. Humphrey (2013) contended that poor quality of health and well-being is determined by factors such as the experience of poverty and deprivation, physical health, subjective well-being and mental health, education, housing, use of time and space, and crime, all factors that resonate with the four ‘pillars’ of Durie’s Te Whare Tapa Whā model.

8 Summary and Implications for Future Practice

The aims of this chapter have been threefold: (1) to describe aspects of SEL particular to the Indigenous Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand, from both traditions of the past and twenty-first century contexts in which Māori live and learn, (2) to highlight interventions that have been drawn from the richness of Māori culture in order to create responsive practices that inherently reflect elements of SEL and (3) to develop our thinking about SEL as an intrinsic part of Māori culture that has a real place in the intricate and demanding learning settings of today’s diverse world.

Irrespective of the past experiences of Māori since the early nineteenth century, where fortitude, resilience, guile and grace offset the wrath of colonial interruptions to patterned, ritualised and learning-oriented lifestyles, today’s Māori-centred interventions (that are grounded in notions of kaupapa Māori) have exemplified their inherent links to SEL across the competency domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. For instance, the Hikairo Rationale (Macfarlane 1997, 2007), Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie 1994, 1997, 2003, 2011), Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education 2008, 2013), the tribal example (Tomlins-Jahnke and Graham 2014) and the case study (Macfarlane 2004) exemplify effective Māori-centred classroom approaches for students’ SEL. There is resonance with effective programming that involves coordinated classrooms, school-wide implementation, family support and community practices that help students develop the five key core competencies. Further, there are sound associations with the four crucial ‘SAFE’ elements (Durlak et al. 2010) and the engagement constructs that characterise the Hikairo Rationale, Te Whare Tapa Whā, Ka Hikitia, the tribal example and the case study.

These Māori cultural constructs are enablers for Māori educational achievement, and their palpability with SEL programme outcomes—promoting positive school climates and cultures as well as enhanced student intrapersonal, interpersonal, cognitive and academic growth (Durlak et al. 2015)—appears to be more than coincidence. That is to say, SEL’s kinship with a selection of Indigenous Aotearoa New Zealand approaches shares content and context that have the potential to make positive gains for Indigenous students, and indeed all students. Taking a longer-term view, these programmes provide students with a greater sense of readiness for higher (tertiary) education and career aspirations along with those

phenomena valued by society—positive family and work relationships, better mental health, reduced criminal behaviour and engaged citizenship (Hawkins et al. 2008; Jones et al. 2015).

9 Conclusion

Creating a culture of care (manaakitanga) in schools that nurtures socially and emotionally safe learning environments oftentimes involves challenging the status quo and reviewing systemic processes and practices that encourage keen student participation in places where high-quality teaching and learning prevail. Given what is known about a legacy of inequitable education policies and programmes from the past, establishing contexts of SEL on a wide-scale basis might not be a fluid passage. Nonetheless, this chapter (and others in this volume) may serve to encourage schools and teachers to develop policies and programmes that are reflective of ethnic and cultural demographics and to tailor educational approaches that better respond to the needs of their diverse learners. When this occurs, it is argued that students will be favourably positioned to develop a sense of purpose; positive social behaviours and relationships with peers and adults; reduced conduct problems and risk-taking behaviour; decreased emotional distress; and improved test scores, grades and attendance (Durlak et al. 2015). A final contention is that the application of SEL programmes founded on Māori constructs is an antidote to the long ‘tail’ of [Māori] disparity as described earlier in the chapter. This co-constructural approach is worthy of consideration because inherent in their respective qualities are touchstones for success in schools, careers and life.

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Part III
Programs and Approaches from the
Australian Context

KidsMatter: Building the Capacity of Australian Primary Schools and Early Childhood Services to Foster Children's Social and Emotional Skills and Promote Children's Mental Health

Lyn Littlefield, Sarah Cavanagh, Rebecca Knapp and Lyn O'Grady

Abstract KidsMatter is an Australian promotion, prevention and early intervention mental health initiative currently being implemented in over 3,000 primary schools and 400 early childhood services. It provides a framework for addressing children's mental health that includes: creating a positive environment; fostering children's social and emotional skills; supporting parenting; and early intervention for children experiencing mental health difficulties. KidsMatter recognises that children who have developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills are more likely to have better outcomes than children who are less competent. Children develop social and emotional skills in the context of their relationships with the significant adults in their lives, including parents, carers and educators. KidsMatter supports early childhood services and schools to embed social and emotional learning (SEL) within the curriculum provided for children. It recommends the implementation of evidence-based SEL programs, but also emphasises the importance of using daily interactions with children to support the development of their SEL skills, providing opportunities for children to practice and adapt their SEL skills and working collaboratively with families to assist children's development of SEL skills.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · KidsMatter · Families · Evidence-based · Curriculum · Programs

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For well over a decade in Australia, there has been increased awareness about how schools and early childhood education and care settings address children's mental health and wellbeing. Rather than being seen as providing support for academic development alone, staff in schools and early childhood education and care settings are now seen as active participants in children's social and emotional learning (SEL) and mental health and wellbeing more broadly (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority 2013; Australian Government Department of Education 2009; Ministerial Council on Education 2008). This shift has seen education settings move towards a mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention model, intervening at the child, family and community level. This has included improving the capability of staff in education settings to recognise those children in need of more specialised mental health care as early as possible and, in collaboration with families, facilitate access to appropriate health and community services. KidsMatter is a key Australian initiative at the forefront of this approach bringing the health and education sectors together to enhance opportunities to most effectively support children's mental health and wellbeing. This chapter will provide an overview of the KidsMatter initiatives and how the framework draws upon the current evidence base to best support the social and emotional development of children within education settings.

1 The KidsMatter Initiatives

Responding to the shift in thinking and research evidence supporting a population-based, universal approach to mental health, the KidsMatter Primary initiative was developed in 2006 and has been successfully implemented in Australian primary schools (for students aged 5–12 years) for over ten years. The KidsMatter Early Childhood initiative was developed to support children aged from birth to 4 years. KidsMatter is an Australian national mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative based on a conceptual framework developed by Littlefield, the founder of KidsMatter. The framework was further developed by the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*, and Principals Australia (formerly the Australian Principals' Associations Professional Development Council), with additional financial support provided by the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund during the pilot phase of KidsMatter Primary (Graetz et al. 2008). These organisations came together to collaborate on developing an evidence-based population approach to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children, reduce the experience of mental health problems and facilitate support for those students experiencing mental health difficulties. Following positive evaluation outcomes from its initial roll-out in primary schools (Slee et al. 2009), the model was adapted (with Early Childhood Australia) for early childhood, education and care settings to meet the needs of younger children (aged from birth to four years), leading to the development of KidsMatter Early Childhood.

The KidsMatter initiatives are based on contemporary research into mental health and wellbeing in early and middle childhood, drawing upon the ecological and individual protective factors known to influence children's development and their mental health and wellbeing (see KidsMatter literature reviews for further information, e.g., KidsMatter (2012)). Some of the protective factors relate to the social, familial and community contexts in which children grow and learn, whilst others relate to children's own unique temperament, social and emotional skills and other personal capacities (Walker et al. 2011). KidsMatter recognises and values the influence of families as the most significant influence on children's mental health and wellbeing, including the development of their social and emotional skills, as well as the important role that staff in education settings and health and community services play in the lives of children. KidsMatter's focus on the children themselves and engaging with adults in the lives of children uses ecological systems theory to understand that child development and mental health and wellbeing do not occur in isolation, but within a constellation of environments and relationships (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006; Darling 2007; Ungar 2011). In this way, the KidsMatter framework enables education settings to ensure that their efforts to support children's mental health and wellbeing are focused most effectively across all the contributing contexts in children's lives and involve all the significant people impacting on children's mental health and wellbeing. As a framework, it enables staff in education settings to draw together the various SEL programs and mental health initiatives they are already undertaking or plan to undertake to ensure cohesiveness of approaches and core messages.

Most recently, the KidsMatter framework, principles and components have also been utilised in the redevelopment of MindMatters, the mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative developed for secondary schools (see www.mindmatters.edu.au). This ensures alignment of the components and key messages of the two initiatives.

1.1 The Four Components of KidsMatter

KidsMatter Early Childhood and KidsMatter Primary each consist of four components based on research evidence about those factors which best support the mental health and wellbeing of children between birth and 12 years of age (e.g. see KidsMatter 2013). Table 1 shows the four components, which are discussed further below. Each of the components includes a range of resources for staff in education settings to undertake professional learning to enhance their understandings of the factors which impact on children's mental health and wellbeing and to explore ways they can enhance their existing work. Tools and other support (such as implementation support meetings, regular e-newsletters, webinars, online videos and social media such as Facebook pages for schools and early childhood education and care services) are provided to enable discussions to take place and actions to be developed to build upon existing work undertaken within the education setting to

Table 1 KidsMatter components

	KidsMatter early childhood	KidsMatter primary
Component 1	Creating a sense of community	Creating a positive school community
Component 2	Developing children's social and emotional skills	Providing social and emotional learning (SEL) for students
Component 3	Working with parents and carers	Working with parents and carers
Component 4	Helping children who are showing signs of mental health difficulties	Helping children with mental health difficulties

support children's mental health and wellbeing. Health and community professionals are similarly provided with a tailored website (<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/health-and-community>), which includes access to mental health information and tools to enhance their work with education settings and families.

The whole-of-education-setting approach promoted by KidsMatter involves the staff in education settings in systematically reviewing staff and setting practices related to the four components in conjunction with their community members, including students, parents and carers. The review provides a process, supported by professional learning, which helps the education staff to identify strengths and challenges they may have and to develop strategies to enhance their work in meaningful and tailored approaches for incorporation into a whole-of-setting mental health and wellbeing strategic plan. This plan can sit within the education settings' broader strategic plans as part of their ongoing review and improvement processes.

KidsMatter supports education settings in making decisions about selecting which SEL programs best suit their community's needs through the provision of the KidsMatter Primary Programs Guide (<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/primary/resources-for-schools/other-resources/programs-guide>) which features over 100 reviewed programs. The KidsMatter Early Childhood Programs Guide (<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/early-childhood/resources-support-childrens-mental-health/programs/programs-guide-search>) includes a further 20 reviewed programs. These Guides were developed following review of the CASEL approach (CASEL 2011) to reviewing programs and include considerations such as the theoretical framework underpinning the program, applicability for various groups, including cultural adaptability, whether formal evaluations have been conducted, professional learning provision for staff, processes for involving families in implementation and measuring outcomes. Importantly, the Programs Guides detail relevant programs for each of the four components of KidsMatter.

Component 1 Component 1 focuses on the ways in which education staff and families can understand children's mental health within the context of their education setting and broader community (including community groups, health and community services, sporting clubs, churches). It also focuses on promoting positive mental health and wellbeing of education setting community members through respectful relationships and building a sense of belonging and inclusion. This

component highlights the importance of social support and participation for education setting community members in enhancing children's mental health and wellbeing. Component 1 helps education settings to identify those who are actively engaged in their community, those who may participate less, and those whose voice is not heard effectively. Education staff are encouraged to explore the diversity of their communities and develop partnerships with community members to find ways to ensure that parents, and carers are able to have their voices heard and participate in meaningful ways.

Component 2 Component 2 of KidsMatter specifically targets the development of children's social and emotional competencies through explicit teaching in the curriculum and practice of skills in developmentally relevant opportunities in everyday experiences. The relationship between the educator and child is highlighted as key to the development of these competencies and skills. Parents and carers are also seen as collaborators in this process as they work in partnership with educators to support the learning and practice of social and emotional skills within the home environment.

Component 2 was based on evidence that social and emotional competencies can be strengthened by being taught formally in schools as part of the school curriculum (Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2011) and that doing so results in positive outcomes for students (Durlak et al. 2011). KidsMatter draws on the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), one of the leading international authorities on SEL research, policy and practice, and incorporates the CASEL model (CASEL 2011) into its Component 2 framework. This model emphasises the utility of providing all children with a SEL curriculum using programs and approaches which:

- have research evidence of effectiveness (or an identified theoretical framework)
- are developmentally appropriate
- are taught regularly and formally.

CASEL has identified five SEL competency areas that are associated with skills for effectively negotiating school, work and life tasks:

1. Self-awareness, where the individual has a growing understanding of themselves, including their emotions, values, personal strengths and limitations
2. Self-management, whereby the individual can recognise, as well as manage their emotions and behaviours in order to achieve their goals
3. Social awareness, where the individual shows understanding and empathy for others
4. Relationship skills, where the individual can form positive relationships, can work in teams and effectively deal with conflict
5. Responsible decision-making, where ethical and constructive choices about personal and social behaviour are made (CASEL 2011).

Developmentally, young babies mostly learn social and emotional skills in face-to-face interactions with adults who hold them, talk to them and nurture them,

whilst preschoolers learn social and emotional skills through experiences that foster co-regulation and positive peer interactions, including opinion-orientated conversation, story-telling and games, and creative ‘hands-on’ experiences (Rushton et al. 2010). Primary school-aged children continue to build upon these foundational skills to recognise and manage emotions, show care and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations effectively (Brazelton and Greenspan 2000; Epstein 2009; Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007).

Component 3 Component 3 explicitly focuses on the importance of parents and carers in the lives of children and as having significant influence on their mental health and wellbeing. KidsMatter promotes a collaborative approach towards educators working with parents and carers for the mutual benefit of children. This requires an appreciation of diversity and an ability to work in culturally appropriate ways. It also recognises the important role that education settings can play in providing support and information about parenting, children’s development and mental health, and ways of supporting the mental health not only of children but of parents and carers as well. For some families, the education setting is the main institution they are connected with. This can provide an opportunity for education settings to engage and provide support to parents and carers and to increase access to a range of supports and information to reduce social isolation through opportunities to interact with other families.

Component 4 Component 4 focuses on helping children who are showing signs of, or experiencing, mental health difficulties such as exhibiting internalising or externalising behaviours or an unexplained change in attitudes or behaviours within the education setting. Family members may also raise concerns with education setting staff about their children’s social or emotional development which may indicate a possible mental health difficulty. KidsMatter highlights the importance of being able to recognise the early signs of possible mental health difficulties, engage effectively with families to raise concerns and to plan appropriate actions which may include referrals to health and community organisations and service providers. The role of health and community services in providing support through consultation, assessment and/or treatment with the child, parents and carers and the education setting staff, as appropriate, is highlighted as a core element of this process. This will be enabled by effective partnership development between education settings and health and community organisations and service providers with clear expectations of each other and referral pathways which enable prompt and effective access to mental health support. Through early intervention, the risk of mental health difficulties occurring or impacting significantly on the child’s development and overall wellbeing can be reduced (Rutter 2011; Sameroff and Fiese 2000).

Summary The four components work in conjunction with each other to build upon and strengthen each area of influence on children’s mental health and wellbeing. The way in which education settings implement the KidsMatter framework is important in making a difference to children’s mental health and wellbeing

outcomes; this includes ensuring professional learning is provided for all staff members, ensuring that strong leadership support is present and engaging the school community in a constant process of reviewing and developing strategies based on the four components. For further information about the KidsMatter four components, see the website: www.kidsmatter.edu.au.

2 Underlying Guiding Principles—The Relationship Between Mental Health and Wellbeing and SEL

KidsMatter has dedicated Component 2 to SEL for all children because of the significant relationship between social and emotional competencies and overall mental health. Research indicates that individuals who understand and accurately perceive their own emotions and the emotions of others, who successfully regulate their own emotions and utilise their emotions in decision-making (i.e. those who have good social and emotional skills), are more likely to enjoy positive mental health and wellbeing (Martins et al. 2010; Schutte et al. 2007).

There are several ways in which social and emotional skills relate to improved mental health, one being a role as mediator between stress and mental health (Berking and Wupperman 2012). Having improved problem solving and coping skills in the face of stress and improved affect regulation significantly contributes to mental health and wellbeing across the lifespan (Bell and McBride 2010; Frydenberg 2009; Kendall 2012; Morris et al. 2007; Stice 2009).

2.1 Relationship Between Academic Learning and Outcomes and SEL

Research suggests that social and emotional competence in childhood, including well-developed social skills, social awareness and emotion regulation, is linked to better academic outcomes over and beyond the contribution made by cognitive skills and IQ (Denham and Brown 2010; Eisenberg et al. 2005; Elias 2006). This may be due to the influence that affects regulation and other social and emotional skills exert on attention, learning and memory (Garner 2010).

Several reviews of school-based, social and emotional skill-based learning have revealed two overarching and coordinated educational strategies (e.g., see Durlak et al. 2011). The first of these strategies involves systematic instruction, modelling and practice of social and emotional skills in developmentally, contextually and culturally appropriate ways. Programs are selected to promote the development of specific skills which target behavioural and social skills of concern to the school. The second strategy involves programming that fosters students' social and emotional development through the establishment of safe and caring learning

environments. This strategy includes broader relationship building, policy application and actions designed to build a positive school community. Participation in intervention programs was found to result in significant improvements in target social and emotional skills, attitudes towards self and others, positive social behaviour, reduced behavioural problems and academic performance (Durlak et al. 2011; Payton et al. 2008). Improvements were also seen to be sustained beyond the duration of these programs (Payton et al. 2008). The most substantial positive results were seen when programs followed clear implementation guidelines, suggesting that program fidelity is an important factor in intervention outcomes (Durlak et al. 2011; Payton et al. 2008).

Broadly speaking, the implementation of SEL programs in school settings has been found to benefit children across three main areas (Zins et al. 2007):

1. *Improvements in school attitudes*, including a stronger sense of community, higher motivation, increased sense of coping, better attitudes about school and better understanding of behavioural consequences
2. *Improvements in student behaviour*, including an increase in prosocial behaviour, fewer suspensions, higher engagement, reduction in aggressive behaviour, fewer absences and greater classroom participation
3. *Improvements in student school performance*, including higher achievement in math, language, arts and social studies; improvements in achievement test scores, and the use of higher-level thinking strategies.

KidsMatter draws upon these links between social and emotional skills and academic learning, particularly within schools, to support education leaders to see the benefits of implementing KidsMatter and prioritising this work to achieve multiple benefits for children.

2.2 *The Importance of Adopting a Whole-Setting Approach to SEL*

Education settings play a significant role in children's lives. Beyond being a place of learning, education settings can be considered a significant "socialisation context" for children where basic social and emotional needs, including the need for belonging and connectedness, can be met. When a child's social and emotional needs are reliably met and there is a sense of belonging and connectedness with the people around them, the educational setting becomes a supportive net of protective factors the child can draw upon, even in the face of adversity (Baumeister et al. 2007).

It is clear therefore that feeling connected to one's school or early childhood setting results in a range of benefits. Where the setting is seen as a place of support, encouragement, warmth and acceptance, where children are valued and have a sense of safety and belonging, where educators and students form relationships of genuine trust, respect, care and appreciation, broad-ranging benefits to children are seen (Roffey 2011). Schools which display the shared values of fairness, justice,

respect, cooperation and compassion are considered to have a positive sense of community, supporting and motivating teachers as well (Keiser and Schulte 2009). KidsMatter reinforces these messages in Component 1 where the importance of relationships and a sense of belonging and connectedness are identified as key factors related to positive mental health.

In a whole-setting approach to SEL, the entire education setting is seen as the unit of change, with SEL integrated at multiple levels across the setting (Oberle et al. 2016). In such an approach, SEL is not only taught in class, but is integrated into day-to-day interactions as well as into policies and practices. This involves active collaboration between education staff, families and children, potentially facilitating change in culture and climate that not only supports and reinforces SEL, but mental health and wellbeing in general (Oberle et al. 2016). This systemic approach helps create a supportive, integrated, comprehensive and coordinated context for effective SEL implementation and decreases the risk of piecemeal and fragmented approaches (Elbertson et al. 2009).

2.3 Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Programs in Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

It is important to note that not all social and emotional programs are seen to benefit all children across all areas (Craig 2009). Program choice, method of implementation and the embedding of such programs in a broader context of a positive education framework can influence the effectiveness of an intervention (Craig 2009; Durlak and DuPre 2008; Durlak et al. 2011). In addition, other aspects such as dosage (i.e. how frequently and for how long a program is implemented), fidelity (i.e. how closely the facilitator adheres to the intervention manual), the quality of implementation (i.e. whether it is administered by qualified, experienced staff) and adaptation (i.e. whether the program deviates in any way from the original program manual) can all influence the demonstrated effectiveness of implemented programs (Abry et al. 2015; Century et al. 2010; Humphrey 2013; Macklem 2014). Intervention ‘drift’, where minor modifications to a program are made either inadvertently or as deliberate adaptations, can also affect the outcome of an intervention, and where this occurs, it is difficult to know whether observed outcomes are attributable to the program, or to the adaptations (Macklem 2014). Educators and education settings need to take these issues into account when choosing SEL programs and in their implementation.

3 Research—Evaluation of Outcomes

3.1 KidsMatter Primary Pilot Evaluation

A comprehensive independent evaluation of the KidsMatter Primary pilot, involving 100 schools across Australia and approximately 5000 children, was

undertaken by the Centre for Analysis of Educational Futures, Flinders University of South Australia (Slee et al. 2009). The findings showed that KidsMatter Primary had a positive impact on schools, staff, children, parents and carers. Key findings included KidsMatter Primary being associated with:

- Improved student mental health and wellbeing (for example, optimism and coping skills).
- Reduced mental health difficulties such as emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, conduct and peer problems. A positive change was found for approximately 1 in 5 students who were originally in the abnormal and borderline ranges of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman 2005) across the period of the KidsMatter trial period. The SDQ was selected as the main outcome assessment of child mental health. It was completed by staff and parents to give a rating of each child's mental health strengths and difficulties in terms of 25 attributes, some positive and some negative. These 25 items are divided between five scales: hyperactivity, conduct problems, emotional symptoms, peer problems and prosocial skills.
- Improved student school work.
- Improved teacher capacity to identify students experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Increased parent and carer capacity to help children with social and emotional issues.
- The placement of mental health as an issue on schools' agendas and the provision of a common language to address mental health and wellbeing issues.

The evaluation found that the ability of students to articulate and provide examples from the particular SEL programs and learning activities that were used was sound evidence for the impact KidsMatter Primary had on the provision of SEL in schools (Slee et al. 2009). Across the two-year pilot, there were increases also in the teachers' ratings of their own knowledge, competence and confidence with respect to teaching students social and emotional competencies. At the end of the two-year period:

- 14% more teachers strongly agreed that they knew how to help their students to develop social and emotional competence
- 16% more teachers strongly agreed that their teaching programs helped students to develop social and emotional competence (Slee et al. 2009).

3.2 KidsMatter Early Childhood Evaluation

A comprehensive independent evaluation of the KidsMatter Early Childhood pilot was undertaken by the Student Wellbeing and Prevention of Violence Research Centre at Flinders University. The researchers found the important goals of

KidsMatter Early Childhood to increase staff knowledge, competence and confidence to support the development of children's social and emotional skills and support children with mental health difficulties were clearly realised (Slee et al. 2012). Approximately half the staff strongly agreed that KidsMatter Early Childhood had helped them to:

- Better recognise children experiencing difficulties (54%)
- Provide better care for children (56%)
- Improve links with professionals who can assist children experiencing difficulties (46%) (Slee et al. 2012).

Regarding factors related to individual children's mental health, child temperament was included as part of the KidsMatter Early Childhood Evaluation conceptual model as it was considered to be related to the development of protective factors early in childhood and crucial for subsequent adjustments to life's challenges and stresses, features related to children's mental health and wellbeing. Two outcomes were found which related to factors of temperament. In the pilot, parents of children of all ages responded to 16 items from the Short Temperament Scales for Toddlers and Children, rating their child on questions concerned with usual patterns of behaviour regarding two key dimensions of temperament, approach-ability and inflexibility-reactivity (Slee et al. 2012).

Parents reported a reduction in children's 'reactivity' and an increase in their 'approachability'. Effect sizes were small, however, and need to be interpreted in relation to children's developing maturity. For the small number of children initially classified as being in the borderline and abnormal ranges on the SDQ, there was a reduction in child mental health difficulties when reassessed on this scale at follow-up. Across the two-year period of KidsMatter Early Childhood, there were 2.7% fewer children, according to staff, and 3.3% fewer children, according to parents, in the combined borderline and abnormal ranges. On average, this represented an improvement for one in six children in the study initially identified with mental health difficulties (Slee et al. 2012).

4 Implications for Practitioners: How Can SEL Be Promoted to Support Students' Social and Emotional Competence?

4.1 Using a Whole-of-Setting Approach to SEL

Whilst there is often a focus on the effectiveness of individual SEL programs, substantial evidence exists for the utility of adopting a whole-setting approach, which subscribes to the values and principles of SEL, and reinforces SEL in everyday interactions within and outside of the school setting (Dix et al. 2012; Graetz et al. 2008; Roffey 2016; Rowe et al. 2007). Two key elements for

practitioners, including health and community professionals and educators, to be mindful of therefore are:

1. how to ensure the education setting provides opportunities for children to practice and generalise their skills outside of formal, structured SEL opportunities.
2. how to implement change that might be needed for the education setting to adopt this whole-of-setting approach and for families to play an active part.

KidsMatter, through its whole-setting approach to supporting children's mental health and wellbeing, and four components which inter-relate and build upon each other, provides an opportunity for education settings to effectively integrate social and emotional skill development into their day-to-day work.

4.2 Educator Training, Including the Role of Mental Health Professionals

Informed and skilled educators are better prepared to implement SEL programs within and beyond the classroom context (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). Educators who have a greater understanding of a SEL program's or approach's concepts are more likely to enable generalisation of the program skills throughout their daily practices through coaching and modelling. As part of Component 2, education staff undertake professional learning in relation to the importance of SEL to children's mental health and wellbeing, how SEL competence develops and ways that staff can support it. This may include an audit of the staff's current use of SEL programs and approaches and plans to enhance their confidence and competence in this area.

In addition, educators' commitment to SEL program implementation and their own social and emotional skills also play a fundamental role in the success of SEL as applied in education settings (Humphrey 2013). Staff typically receive little training about how to develop and manage their own feelings and displays of emotion (Meyer and Turner 2006) and are rarely given sufficient preparation and ongoing support to develop the necessary skills and attitudes to successfully implement SEL programs (Durlak et al. 2011). As a core component of KidsMatter, SEL for all students encourages education staff to become aware of and to enhance the development of these skills in students, as well as to recognise those students experiencing significant challenges with SEL as potentially requiring further support (such as through processes established through KidsMatter Component 4: supporting children with mental health difficulties). In this context, there is increasing recognition of the importance of professional development for educators that strengthens their own SEL, rather than focusing exclusively on the teaching of these skills to students (Jennings and Frank 2015).

4.3 *Engaging Families*

The majority of whole-of-setting approaches to SEL stress collaboration between the educators and families. Evidence suggests that children do well socially and academically when parents and carers are actively and positively involved in their child's education (Garbacz et al. 2015). KidsMatter recognises the important role that families play in children's mental health and wellbeing and encourages the engagement of families in the education setting's SEL programs. This might include providing parenting education sessions or SEL-specific sessions to parents and carers, or inviting parents and carers to be involved in assisting their children with SEL-based homework. The inclusion of parents and carers in decision-making regarding the child's education and around education setting policy and planning where possible is increasingly recognised as significant in working effectively to enhance children's mental health and wellbeing (Commonwealth of Australia 2012; Garbacz et al. 2015; Macklem 2014).

5 Future Directions for Research and Practice

Although SEL has now been a focus in education for more than a decade, it is by no means a static field. There are continual efforts to develop new and to improve existing, SEL programs, as can be seen from the KidsMatter Programs Guides. A considerable amount of work remains to be done to advance the field, however (Goleman 2015), particularly in relation to strengthening the evidence base relating to programs and their implementation.

5.1 *Evaluation: Strengthening the Evidence Base*

One essential area identified in the field as needing further work is in improving the quality of evidence in support of SEL programs. There is a vast number of programs available purporting to teach SEL skills, and new programs are continually being developed, with varying degrees of rigour applied to establishing an evidence base for their effectiveness. Conducting rigorous effectiveness trials of established SEL programs to identify the 'active', crucial components of successful programs versus desirable but less essential aspects will help providers to reliably deliver programs targeting what is intended (Weissberg et al. 2015).

Better operationalisation of target social and emotional skills and developing new methods of evaluating them which rely less on self/other report and more on the demonstration of these target skills will bring the field closer to establishing what works for learners. Another criticism relates to the lack of clarity around whom to evaluate in order to measure effectiveness. For example, a program may

aim to improve children's social and emotional competencies through enhancing the educators' awareness and skills in explicitly teaching these skills. When evaluating programs, evaluating the educators' understanding and skill level may be more appropriate than measuring children's competencies. Further, when evaluating child, versus parent or carer, versus teacher reports, confounding information is often obtained, with potentially none providing an 'objective' or completely accurate view of target variables (Weissberg et al. 2015).

5.2 *Cultural Adaptations*

Whilst fidelity is generally considered the ideal when implementing SEL programs, adaptation to best meet the needs of cultural groups is also recommended. Current thinking is that both can be addressed if rigorous program development, pilot testing, and evaluation strategies are used throughout the development and implementation process (Barrera and Castro 2006; Castro et al. 2010). Many evidence-based programs might appear to demonstrate efficacy when applied to various cultural groups; however, this is not routinely, nor rigorously evaluated (Garner et al. 2014). Several variables might indicate the need for program adaptation (Barrera and Castro 2006):

- where an evidence-based program does not demonstrate efficacy in achieving the desired outcomes with a particular cultural group
- where the group exhibits unique risk or resilience factors or clinical problems
- where there are issues that might impact on recruitment, retention or participation
- where a particular cultural group has difficulty in accessing the program (Hecht and Shin 2015, p. 59).

Some researchers have commenced work in this area, by evaluating existing SEL programs or whole-setting approaches for various cultural groups, or adapting SEL programs for use with differing cultural groups and evaluating their effectiveness (see, for example, Barrett et al. 2014). KidsMatter is one such initiative, having gone part of the way in evaluating the applicability and effectiveness of the KidsMatter Early Childhood initiative to settings with a high proportion of Indigenous Australian children, revealing promising results (Slee et al. 2012). However, more needs to be done in this arena to more comprehensively understand and integrate the needs of culturally diverse community members into education programs, processes and practices (see Dobia and Roffey 2016 this volume).

In particular, more needs to be done to understand how different cultures conceptualise SEL and whether the same definitions and methods of affective and behavioural expression and affect regulation apply. Concerns have been raised that central, implicit, cultural values might influence how SEL is conceived and administered in educational settings. Moreover, in considering social and emotional

competencies as a unitary model, other more culturally relevant and equally effective concepts, skills and strategies might potentially be overlooked or disregarded (Hoffman 2009).

5.3 *Technology*

Children and adolescents in western societies spend much of their free time, up to 8 h per day, using digital media (Rideout et al. 2010). Research currently suggests that the impact of digital media on children's development and mental health depends on the content of the media, the developmental age of the child, and what alternative, health-promoting activities, might be sacrificed through time spent using it (Bavelier et al. 2010; Lieberman et al. 2009). There is significant evidence to suggest that in the right context and pitched at the right developmental level, with high quality content, digital media can have a positive influence on children, transcending social and cultural advantage or disadvantage (Bavelier et al. 2010; Hirsh-Pasek et al. 2015). A criticism applied to the use of digital media in the general education field, however, relates to the lack of robust evaluation of effectiveness and the proliferation of education apps continuing unregulated (Hirsh-Pasek et al. 2015).

Much of the research on the impact of digital media to date has focused on gaming or academic content and developmental outcomes. However, research into the potential use of digital media in SEL has recently begun. One avenue where apps might benefit SEL is in their potential for providing scaffolding for parents and carers to reinforce SEL in the home and to assist in the generalisation of skills using interactive social stories which respond to the child's own responses and experiences. These have been areas identified as gaps that technology might fill (Slovák et al. 2015, April).

6 **Conclusion**

The KidsMatter initiatives provide schools and early childhood education and care services with a comprehensive framework to the development of social and emotional competencies and skills to support children's mental health and wellbeing. Through the four components of KidsMatter, the initiatives recognise that children's social and emotional competencies develop within a context of the environments in which they grow and learn, influenced by the adults who care for them, particularly parents and carers and educators. By focusing upon evidence-based approaches to SEL, KidsMatter supports those adults to understand its value and the importance of implementing this model to enhance children's overall mental health and wellbeing outcomes. The successful outcomes of the KidsMatter evaluations reinforce the value of the KidsMatter model which incorporates SEL in schools and

early childhood education and care services as part of a whole-of-setting approach to supporting children's mental health and wellbeing.

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Respect for Culture—Social and Emotional Learning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth

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Abstract International research into the benefits of social and emotional learning (SEL) is frequently cited in support of incorporating universal approaches to SEL in schools. However, the SEL competencies widely applied have not been investigated for their cross-cultural applicability. In this chapter, we investigate the role of culture in the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the implications for SEL. We begin with an illustrative vignette that raises questions of culture and cultural difference and introduces a review of the policy and practice domains pertinent to our inquiry. A cultural analysis reveals the reasons why standardised approaches to SEL are inadequate for supporting social and emotional development amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and their communities. Drawing on our own work in schools, we highlight the crucial role of culture and identity in mediating self-awareness and social development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. This is demonstrated through discussion of findings from the ‘Indigenous adaptation’ of KidsMatter and from the implementation and evaluation of the Aboriginal Girls’ Circle (AGC) initiative. An examination of the ASPIRE principles underpinning the AGC demonstrates the ways that SEL has been integrated with support for cultural identity, and the benefits of doing so. We conclude that culturally responsive SEL requires a ‘two-way’ approach negotiated with local communities on the basis of mutual learning and respect for Indigenous cultures.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Indigenous cultures · Cultural responsiveness · Cultural identity · Aboriginal Girls Circle · Two-way learning

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1 Respect for Culture—Social and Emotional Learning with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander¹ Youth

In 1982 a young Aboriginal man came to stay with me (Dobia). At the request of a social worker friend I had agreed to provide the supported accommodation he required as part of his bail conditions. My friend introduced us at the courthouse and then left us, both rather shy, to get acquainted.

Ray was polite, softly spoken, a neat and tidy house guest who was willing to do whatever he was asked. As an emerging clinical psychologist, I felt if I taught him the latest on interpersonal cognitive problem-solving skills (Spivack and Shure 1982) it might help Ray feel more in control of his behaviour so he could make better decisions. He seemed to appreciate my enthusiasm but did not talk much. Still, I thought we were making progress. I remained concerned, however, that Ray slept late, only emerging from his room at lunchtime. I assumed he was depressed.

Then the police arrived. It turned out that the late sleeping was to compensate for spending nights out stealing cars. The pressure to ‘fix up’ his behaviour had increased Ray’s anxiety beyond his capacity to manage it. His bail release lasted for three days.

This story can be read from several distinct vantage points. A social and emotional learning (SEL) perspective suggests, along with Spivack and Shure, that behaviour problems can be prevented through promoting student competencies in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, effective relationships, and responsible decision-making (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL] 2015; Greenberg et al. 2003). Looking through a SEL lens, it seems likely that, had skills for emotion regulation and responsible decision-making been available to Ray, he might have been able to meet his bail conditions and avoid an unceremonious return to court. This position says that Ray had not learnt the skills necessary to make a constructive choice. A fairly simple assessment along these lines seemed sound in theory, if not in practice.

In this instance, however, the magistrate took the view that Ray’s behaviour indicated that he did not want to make a different choice, despite having had the opportunity. This kind of pragmatic assessment, widely held in the Australian community, views behaviour as up to the individual, who can simply choose to do the ‘right thing’ or not. It is justified via a ready logic: no-one made Ray go out at night and steal cars; it was his choice. Since he needed to be held accountable for his actions, his behaviour meant he was ‘choosing’ to go back to gaol.

Despite their evident divergences of treatment, these two rather different perspectives share some common assumptions. Learning how to make responsible decisions is understood to require the ability to link actions to consequences, as well

¹There is no single descriptor that adequately represents the diversity of Indigenous people in Australia. This diversity spans languages, stories, customs, living context and more. In this chapter we use the collective designations ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ and ‘Indigenous’ Australians while acknowledging the limitations of both terms.

as a capacity to exercise choice over one's actions. In terms of SEL, this understanding underpins the seminal work of Spivack and Shure and is also exemplified in a range of evidence-based programs such as Elias and Kress's (1994) work on social decision-making and Kusché and Greenberg's (1994) emphasis on teaching social cognitive skills through the PATHS SEL program. While these SEL approaches are more developmentally supportive than the consequence-based perspective of the judicial system, they nonetheless share the assumption that the pathway for Ray to achieve responsible pro-social behaviour is through individual, independent effort, and determination to change his thinking patterns.

None of these approaches, however, considers the role of culture or the complexities of connecting with a broken heritage in order to achieve a positive sense of cultural identity against a backdrop of denial, dispossession and denigration (Carlson 2016). Cultural complications are not typically taken into account in the formulation of mainstream SEL programs, where assumptions regarding the trajectory through the five competencies from self-awareness to responsible decision-making are modelled on an individualistic conception of selfhood. In Ray's case, change did not occur through explicit teaching of emotion regulation and decision-making, though he undoubtedly mastered these skills. Rather, through forming relationships with Aboriginal Elders and learning about his Aboriginal cultural history, Ray was able to overcome the sense of disconnection he felt through having been adopted into a non-Indigenous family. This reconnection with culture was what he needed to find his way, and himself.

2 Closing the Gap?

In 2005, the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey found that 24% of Aboriginal children between 4 and 17 years of age demonstrated signs of serious emotional or behavioural difficulties (Zubrick et al. 2005). More recently, a national report on young people's well-being (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, AIHW 2011) indicated that 33% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 18–24 years reported high or very high levels of psychological distress, compared with 14% of non-Indigenous youth. On a range of indicators, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth were found to be at heightened risk of exposure to trauma, violence and abuse (AIHW 2011). Persistent evidence of the weight of social and emotional difficulties affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people highlights an urgent need for effective, preventive efforts to reduce a disproportionate burden of distress, increase educational success and improve life chances (AIHW 2015; Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, SCRGSP 2014).

Underlying the statistics is an array of interlocking risk factors that are often chronic and pervasive (Zubrick et al. 2014). These include social disadvantage relating to educational, economic and employment opportunities and outcomes, as well as specific impacts due to colonisation and ongoing discrimination.

Dispossession, loss of culture, racism, reduced access to appropriate services and resources, and high rates of adverse life events have a cumulative effect on the stress felt by many Aboriginal people, contributing to health, social and behavioural problems that in turn increase vulnerability to health and wellbeing risks (Carson et al. 2007; Kelly et al. 2010).

Initiated in 2008, the 'Closing the Gap' agenda has focused Australian government policies on reducing health inequality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within a generation (Council of Australian Governments, COAG 2008). The National Indigenous Reform Agreement outlined six measurable targets aimed at reducing inequality and improving health outcomes. Of these, three targets are informed by an early intervention emphasis on schooling outcomes: ensure that all Indigenous 4-year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years; halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade; halve the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 attainment (COAG 2008). In 2014, a further target to close the gap in school attendance by the end of 2018 was added to the list (SCRGSP 2014), reinforcing the government's emphasis on education as a major building block for achieving social equity and improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (COAG 2012).

Although there is evidence of the direct benefits of SEL for enhancing both mental health and academic success (Dix et al. 2012; Durlak et al. 2011), the Closing the Gap targets, up till now, have not incorporated an explicit emphasis on SEL. In pursuing its school attendance target, the government instead sought to enforce a consequence-driven model, with 'choices' and punishments prescribed by policy objectives rather than evidence (Biddle 2014; Purdie and Buckley 2010). Intentionally or not, this coercive approach reinstates the project of assimilation, in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are unquestioningly expected to adopt the standards of white Australian society in order to be included in what it has to offer (Beresford 2012).

Under such an assimilationist agenda, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are seen as deficient and in need of remediation. This view has historical roots in colonialist psychological research, which advanced the belief that differences in tested IQ were due to an innate racial deficit and that differences in educational performance were due to a cultural deficit affecting cognitive development (Dudgeon et al. 2014a). Despite new initiatives that seek to move beyond assimilation towards more socially and culturally inclusive approaches, deficit orientations in educational practice remain significant obstacles to achieving equity for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Price 2012).

The lens of 'whiteness' through which educational goals and initiatives are (still) refracted has significant impacts, not only on educational outcomes but on social and emotional well-being. Parbury (2011) highlighted 'the vicious cycle of attitudes and expectations, experiences and practices that have affected and still affect the education of Aboriginal students in Australian schools' (p. 140). Figure 1 depicts the influence of deficit thinking about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students throughout the education system, showing the multiple feedback loops that entrench low expectations, low motivation, low self-efficacy and diminished

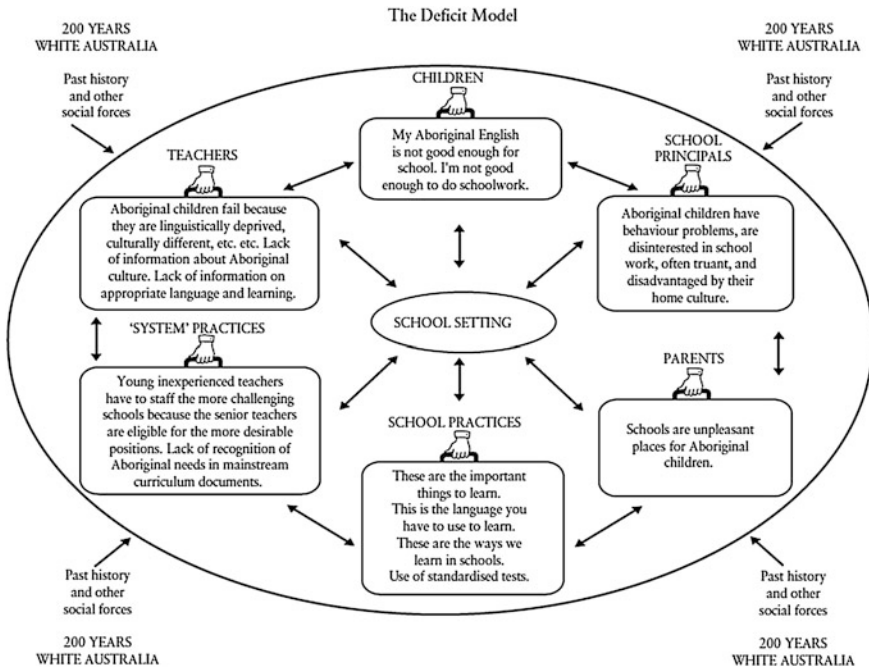


Fig. 1 The deficit model, reproduced with permission from Parbury (2011, p. 140), after Cambourne and Turbill (1990)

self-worth, all of which may be expected to come with emotional and behavioural sequelae.

What perpetuates this cycle is not the supposed cultural deficit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families, but what Rose (2012) terms the ‘silent apartheid’, which is based on practitioners’ ignorance of Aboriginal issues in education and in the wider society. This blind spot is maintained by an absence of meaningful engagement between non-Indigenous educators and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities with whom they work. While the opportunity for students to develop social and emotional skills would seem a useful way to counteract some of the effects of the deficit model, SEL programs based on explicit classroom teaching of formal skills that privilege non-Indigenous ways of thinking, feeling and behaving may reinforce rather than challenge a deficit lens (Hoffman 2009; Humphrey 2013).

Despite the Closing the Gap framework, there are worsening trends for the mental health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Holland 2015; SCRGSP 2014). Incarceration rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth have increased to 24 times the rate of non-Indigenous youth (AIHW 2016; Amnesty International 2015). Aboriginal communities and Elders have expressed alarm at a sharp increase in self-harm and youth suicide (Culture Is Life 2015; Department of Health & Ageing 2013).

In its 2015 report, the Close the Gap Campaign Steering Committee called for a new priority focus on addressing mental health and suicide prevention. As part of this emphasis, it advocated that school-based social and emotional programs could play an important role in addressing mental health risks, observing that ‘promoting social and emotional wellbeing and resilience should also contribute to improving school attendance and performance because it will support children to cope with bullying and racism’ (Holland 2015, p. 39). The evidence of increasing distress and inequity makes a concerted emphasis on prevention strategies imperative. However, though the argument for SEL as the ‘missing piece’ may seem compelling, it seems wise to follow Humphrey’s (2013) lead in critically appraising the state of our knowledge before charging in, as I (Dobia) attempted to do in 1982, with the latest ‘evidence-based’ cure-all.

3 Universalism Versus Cultural Fit

Internationally, systematic evaluation of outcomes from school SEL programs has provided impressive evidence for its effectiveness in improving not only social and emotional skills but also attitudes, behaviour and academic performance (Durlak et al. 2011). On this basis, SEL programs, particularly those that employ the CASEL (2015) framework, are widely assumed to be universally applicable. However, as the majority of ‘evidence-based’ SEL programs have been developed and tested in urban contexts in the USA, claims for universal effectiveness remain untested (Humphrey 2013). While a number of Australian SEL programs have been found to be effective for a general population, we have only identified one ‘evidence-based’ program, available in one region in Western Australia (Coffin et al. 2010), which has been rigorously developed from a cultural perspective for and with Aboriginal students.

In assuming universality of psychological norms and constructs, much of psychology is blind to its ethnocentric biases (Dudgeon and Walker 2015; Henrich et al. 2010). In fact, as Hecht and Shin (2015) elaborate, there is substantial evidence of cultural differences in relation to social and emotional development. These differences may be seen in the structures, functions and processes through which culture manifests, with implications for all five of the competencies identified by CASEL (2015).

Hecht and Shin observe that, of the many psychological constructs that are shaped by cultural assumptions, ‘none [is] more basic than how the self is defined’ (2015, p. 52). In contrast to individualist notions of self that prevail in Anglophone and other Eurocentric societies, in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies culturally prescribed kinship structures support collectivist notions of self that are ‘inseparable from, and embedded within, family and community’ (Gee et al. 2014, p. 57). Connections to land, cultural heritage and language (where possible) also profoundly influence the sense of self for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Gee et al. 2014; Kickett-Tucker and Coffin 2011), as does a sense

of connection to the particular spiritual beliefs and lore that relate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to place, to the Ancestors, and to all living things. Stories, ritual and ceremony are the traditional vehicles for passing down such knowledge (Grieves 2009; Poroch et al. 2009).

Emerging research on cultural identity and self-concept suggests that the ‘self’ is both more complex and more nuanced than is implied by the seemingly simple distinction between collectivist and individualist identities (Dobia et al. 2013; Kickett-Tucker et al. 2015; Osborne and Taylor 2010). Cultural differences occur in relation to structural aspects of the self, as well as functional aspects, such as kinship rules governing social engagement, and processes that influence the ways that communication occurs. Consideration of these issues is important when considering SEL programming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with particular attention to differences in the formation of self- and social awareness, which in turn affect self-management and relationship skills.

Widely assumed developmental norms based on non-Indigenous cultural values and lifestyles are generally a poor fit for the socialisation experiences and challenges that face Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Carson et al. 2007; Kickett-Tucker and Coffin 2011). Differences in social circumstances and cultural values are particularly evident in remote locations where Indigenous languages and traditional lifestyles have survived, despite threats of territorial encroachment and social abandonment (Altman 2010; Kral 2010). In urban contexts, though less visible outwardly, cultural values and practices also remain important, against the impacts of institutional racism, negative social stereotypes and associated stressors (Priest et al. 2012b).

Unfortunately, racism is also a major contributor to cultural identity (Kickett-Tucker and Coffin 2011). Whereas a strong positive sense of cultural identity is associated with well-being benefits (Dockery 2011; Dobia et al. 2013; Priest et al. 2012a), ongoing racism can perversely strengthen cultural identity but undermine well-being (Paradies and Cunningham 2012) and academic engagement (Bodkin-Andrews et al. 2013). Kickett-Tucker (2009) found that Aboriginal students’ well-being related to where they ‘fit’ as an Aboriginal person, how they were accepted and treated by others, how they socially interacted with others, and how they were engaged by others. These findings clearly indicate the complex interplay between social awareness and self-awareness in relation to, on the one hand, a collectivist sense of self and, on the other, the threat of racism.

In addition, Yeatman (cited in Dobia and O’Rourke 2011, p. 16) has highlighted the problems of miscommunication that transpire when non-Indigenous teachers work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students without taking account of cultural differences in the conventions governing social interaction. This contributes to discrepancies over behavioural expectations and may quickly escalate into conflict and punitive measures. As noted previously, a lack of cultural understanding too often leads to inequitable or discriminatory practice towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools. If SEL is to contribute to

improved practices and outcomes, it would seem that ‘there is much more work to be done in order to develop a framework for SEL that is appropriately culture-sensitive’ (Humphrey 2013, p. 23).

4 KidsMatter Pilot: Implications for Closing the Gap

In Australia, the KidsMatter initiative has been successful in championing the inclusion of evidence-based SEL programs as part of a comprehensive approach to school-based mental health. Evidence from the KidsMatter pilot evaluation indicated widespread benefits for children’s mental health and resilience as well as academic gains (Slee et al. 2009; Dix et al. 2012). However, for schools catering to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, implementation effectiveness during the pilot was limited due to a lack of cultural specificity (Dobia 2010a, b). This was particularly an issue in remote schools with student populations at or near 100% Aboriginal. All four remote schools in the pilot withdrew without completing the implementation.

To inform the ‘Indigenous adaptation’ of KidsMatter, research consultations were undertaken with eight pilot schools, selected on the basis of having a population of 20% or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Three of the eight schools also hosted more extensive field visits. The purpose was to assess the suitability of the KidsMatter pilot implementation resources and to investigate ways that KidsMatter could support schools to cater more effectively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and communities.

Only one school was demonstrably successful in engaging Aboriginal students in SEL. The SEL program chosen employed a cooperative learning strategy, framed around four core agreements that foster respect and inclusion (Gibbs 2006). This approach was clearly seen to have particular strengths for addressing shyness, inclusion and responsible behaviours, as well as other skills. Program flexibility was essential to support engagement, as was the active involvement of Aboriginal facilitators. In observations and in interviews with students, the benefits of this approach for social skills development and responsible behaviour were impressive (Dobia 2010a).

The ‘right to pass’, which affirms students’ choice in determining whether and when they wish to contribute to group discussion, was found to be especially valuable for overcoming ‘shame’ and encouraging student ownership. Shame is common in Aboriginal people’s social interactions, often manifesting as shyness and inhibition about stepping forward (Harrison 2008). In this context, shame is not so much related to guilt as it is to an awareness of one’s place as part of the collective. In this way, it may be seen to reveal a heightened sensitivity to how one fits in with others. However, shame may also indicate a low sense of self-efficacy and heightened caution in social situations, consistent with the effects of bullying and racism.

The benefits for Aboriginal students of the program undertaken at this school were seen by Aboriginal staff as profound (Dobia 2010a). ‘[It] is very inclusive. The kids are all involved—mutual respect, attentive listening, appreciations, no put-downs, right to pass’. Having the right to pass was very effective for promoting inclusion. ‘They have a right to pass, but they have the opportunity to have a part of it. ... they see the other kids doing it and it comes back around to their turn again’. This process of vicarious learning may be seen to be particularly effective due to its congruence with familiar cultural processes for negotiating social interactions, and the opportunities it offers for expressing oneself in relation to the collective.

Taking a proactive stance to counteract racism was also evident at this school where events that valued Aboriginal culture were regularly incorporated and Aboriginal students were provided with opportunities to learn more about their heritage. The ‘Little Yorgas’ was a program developed by an Aboriginal staff member.

“It’s a program that we’ve put in place for the self-esteem side. You get them doing things they wouldn’t particularly do and get their pride back into them. Show them cultural things. Get them out on excursions, show them what’s what, be proud of who you are and stand up for what you believe in. ... The girls always ask me ‘Auntie, When’s the little Yorgas going to be on, when’s the little Yorgas going to be on?’ ”

For the girls who participated: “It makes us feel good because we get to know more about a long time ago and we want to keep our spirit up” (Dobia and O’Rourke 2012, p. 4).

A similar emphasis on keeping spirit up was prominent in remote schools where keeping language and culture intact was an overarching priority. They identified their goals as ‘growing a strong spirit’ and sought to find ways of supporting social and emotional development through strengthening traditional frameworks for kinship and respectful relationships. In these schools, where English is spoken as a second, third or fourth language, staff wanted to develop their own SEL programs, in language and with cultural strengths embedded (Dobia 2010b).

Findings from the KidsMatter Indigenous adaptation project afforded the following recommendations for undertaking SEL with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. To promote cultural responsiveness SEL teaching must acknowledge and work with differences in communication and relationship styles. Sharing planning and co-facilitation of SEL between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous teachers is ideal for promoting culturally inclusive teaching and learning. Exploration of values associated with SEL approaches is necessary for developing culturally responsive practice (Dobia 2010a). An interactive, egalitarian pedagogy, such as the cooperative learning approach identified above, is likely to be effective for working across differences and seems well suited to the autonomous communication styles of Aboriginal children (cf. Yeatman, in Dobia and O’Rourke 2011, p. 16).

5 The Aboriginal Girls Circle: Principles and Processes for Empowerment

The Aboriginal Girls Circle (AGC) is a SEL intervention targeted to increase social connection, participation and self-confidence amongst Aboriginal girls attending secondary schools. It was developed with the support of the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) in response to a request from a regional high school in NSW for a program specifically for Aboriginal girls that would address significant behaviour issues, develop their confidence and improve their relationships within the school and community. The school's commitment to implementing the AGC, embodied in the resolve of its deputy principal, and the ongoing support of NAPCAN staff were critical to the success of the pilot.

This school serves a population where socio-economic disadvantage is common. Its 49% of Aboriginal students include a majority with affiliations to the immediately located Indigenous custodians; however, the town is a meeting point for people from numerous other traditional language groups, and tensions between groups are known to fuel conflict at times. While a concerted effort to revive the traditional language of the area is now under way, English has long been the dominant language of communication and learning here. The focus of our pilot research into the AGC was not only to evaluate the program but also, centrally, to investigate its cultural fit, with particular attention to exploring the nature of resilience and wellbeing in Aboriginal youth and their links to cultural identity (Dobia et al. 2013).

Using a strengths-based approach, the AGC combines Circle Solutions methodology (Roffey 2014a) with community-based project work in order to build girls' social and emotional skills and develop their sense of agency, leadership and community connection. It includes the successful features of the cooperative learning program identified in the KidsMatter evaluation cited above and furthers this focus.

Circle Solutions (Roffey 2014a) provides a framework for group interaction that aims to promote positive relationships, resilience and responsibility and is applicable for all ages. In common with other school-based SEL programs, Circle Solutions offers structured support for skills development (Weissberg et al. 2015). It is underpinned by a competency-based framework that aligns with, and extends, the CASEL model (Roffey 2010; Roffey and McCarthy 2013); however, its emphasis on flexible delivery, on building student engagement and ownership and on eliciting student strengths differs from the standardised frameworks typical of most other SEL programs.

The Circle Solutions pedagogy of engagement places student voice and agency at the centre of SEL and provides for flexibility of content, dependent on age, need and context. The Circle Solutions framework employs specific structured processes for group interaction that are designed to meet a core set of governing principles, articulated in the ASPIRE framework. ASPIRE stands for Agency, Safety,

Positivity, Inclusion, Respect and Equality. The rationale, evidence and application for each of these principles are outlined below.

Agency When students have agency, they are empowered to make decisions on behalf of themselves (Ryan and Deci 2000, 2001). This is not only about choice, but also about taking responsibility. Unless young Aboriginal women know they can take control of their own lives and make their own decisions, they will be at the mercy of others who want to control their futures (Dudgeon et al. 2003). Evidence of the AGC girls' growing sense of agency was apparent in stakeholder reports of a new or renewed capacity and willingness to speak up, take on leadership roles and resolve conflicts more effectively (Dobia et al. 2013).

Agency is cultivated in the AGC through a power-sharing pedagogy that invites the girls to be co-determiners of the processes and topics covered. For example, the girls work together to produce a set of guidelines to ensure they will be safe and responsible on the overnight camps. They decide together on the focus of their community projects, which they are responsible for carrying out. Over the two years of the AGC pilot, the girls' choice of topics included cultural awareness, anti-racism, friendship and fighting, and community health issues. These choices reflected the intersection between the development of a strong sense of cultural identity and the girls' growing capacity for personal and collective agency. Their work on these projects was supported by Elders from the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) who provided invaluable guidance in the planning and implementation of the girls' community engagement.

Safety Critical to effective pedagogy in SEL is the need to ensure that Circles are safe places for students and teachers (Ecclestone 2004). The promotion of safety is embedded in the Circle Solutions pedagogy in several ways. The 'right to pass' and stay silent has proved to be a critical aspect of the pedagogy. Many girls pass when it is their turn to speak when they first attend the Circle. This alleviates the risk of 'shame' and enables the girls to establish a sense of comfort and trust that promotes growing confidence.

Issues are addressed but specific incidents are not, and opportunities to share highly personal information are limited. The use of role play, stories, games and creative activities enables issues to be explored in an impersonal, indirect way. For example, the girls who chose 'friendship and fighting' as their project developed a play and dance to show alternative ways of handling conflict.

Cooperative learning is valuable across the curriculum but especially so in SEL (Johnson and Johnson 1999). Activities take place in pairs, small groups or encompass the whole Circle, providing opportunities for interaction that put developing skills into practice. Learning to work effectively with others increases a sense of safety and support. The pilot data showed that positive peer relationships were strongly related to resilience factors, including problem-solving, self-efficacy, empathy, self-awareness and cooperation/communication (Dobia et al. 2013).

Maintaining cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involves 'enhanc[ing] rather than diminish[ing] individual and collective cultural identities' (Walker et al. 2014, p. 201). For girls in the AGC pilot, the sense of

safety in the Circle was apparent in a growing sense of openness and connection with one another. Being together as Aboriginal girls was particularly significant. ‘Being around not just any girls, like girls that mean a lot to you and you can share everything with them and you can be yourself around them instead of, like, other girls where you have to, like, be another person’ (Dobia et al. 2013, p. 13). The opportunity to come together in this way enabled the girls to build a positive sense of cultural identity and shared strength. The AGC Project Officer, herself a young Aboriginal woman, elaborated on the benefits: ‘You can just see it—their eyes light up. They feel like a family and they know that they’re allowed to say—it’s not wrong, whatever they say. Just having that connection that they, I don’t think they’ve ever had with anyone else. Same with myself. It’s a good feeling’ (Dobia et al. 2013, p. 13).

Positivity Resilience research has shown that a positive outlook is a protective factor (Werner 2004). This is incorporated in the focus on strengths, solutions and the active generation of positive emotions. The AGC works with students to identify positive individual strengths and take pride in community strengths. One activity uses the Yarnabout Cards (Nungeena Aboriginal Women’s Corporation 2009) laid out in the middle of the Circle. These are a set of photographs portraying a wide spectrum of Australian life. Girls work in pairs or small groups and each chooses a picture that makes them feel proud. They talk with each other about why they chose this photograph and what it means to them, identifying what they have in common. Girls not only look to discover their own character strengths but also identify those of others. The aim of Circle Solutions is not just to develop skills but to change perceptions.

The AGC encourages girls to look to the future. What would life be like if things were going well? What would be happening if we were feeling good? So how do we take steps in that direction? Positive emotions promote an effective climate for learning. They not only enable students to focus but they also facilitate creativity and problem-solving (Fredrickson 2009).

Positive emotions include: a sense of belonging, feeling valued, safe, comfortable, cared for, respected and loved. Positive emotions are also experienced in moments of exuberance, excitement and shared humour. Humour is a strong feature of Aboriginal culture, developed in resistance to colonisation and affirming of community bonds (Duncan 2014). The playfulness, fun and positive focus of the AGC activities (Hromek and Roffey 2009) were particularly highly valued by the girls. ‘You can go to AGC sad and you’ll leave it like really happy’ (Dobia et al. 2013, p. 8).

Inclusion Feeling included and connected at school and in social relationships is one of the most important factors in resilience and psychological well-being (Roffey 2011). School connectedness has been found to reduce behavioural problems, enhance student achievement and reduce the likelihood of developing mental health problems (Bond et al. 2007). It is critical, however, that this connectedness is inclusive and not exclusive. Inclusiveness is about ensuring that everyone is valued,

not just those who can achieve academic targets (Roffey 2013) or fit specific cultural norms.

The Circle Solutions approach actively promotes inclusion with the expectation that everyone works with everyone else. Energetic games mix everyone up. This breaks up cliques and helps people to get to know and develop new perspectives on one another. Pair activities focus on looking for things the participants have in common, building skills for collaboration and care. Although some activities take place in teams, the emphasis is on inclusion and collaboration rather than competition.

Fostering inclusion through the AGC is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students because they are exposed to high rates of social exclusion. One indicator from NSW shows that in 2014 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were 6.8% of the total student population but accounted for 26% of suspensions (NSW DEC 2014; NSW DOE 2015). Schools that lack effective strategies for engaging Aboriginal parents and students and have inflexible disciplinary systems are more likely to ignore racially based discriminatory treatment that may manifest in institutional practices, teacher attitudes and student behaviour (Bodkin-Andrews et al. 2013). Our research into the AGC confirmed that Aboriginal students experienced more bullying and racism than non-Indigenous students (Dobia et al. 2013). For girls in the AGC, choosing to undertake their project on anti-racism promoted a sense of agency towards addressing racial injustice and enhanced their sense of cultural and community connectedness.

Cultivating connectedness has particular relevance for Aboriginal people, for whom values of reciprocity and interdependence are prominent dimensions of cultural identity and kinship. Restoring and reconnecting to culture, family, community and country are seen as a pathway to well-being (Kingsley et al. 2013). The focus in the AGC on promoting inclusion is multidimensional: positive connection between the girls, connection with culture, connection with community and a greater sense of belonging at school.

Respect Respect is also multidimensional. It applies to self-respect—how you think about yourself, who you are and who you are becoming; respect for others—not dismissing someone’s opinion or making quick judgements; and respect for culture—where you are from, your community history, identity and protocols. Respect is incorporated in two Circle guidelines: when one person is speaking everyone will listen; there are no put-downs.

Although respect means listening to what others have to say, this can only happen when there are opportunities to speak. Young people who have little control in their lives might shout to be heard and are then seen as disruptive. In the AGC, everyone has a regular chance to speak. Using games, photographs, stories, discussion cards and role-plays, the girls have many opportunities to reflect on and discuss issues that concern them—such as friendship and feelings. Learning to communicate with respect was clearly seen as a positive feature of the AGC that helped to build positive relationships and connectedness within the group. ‘You feel

like you're a part of something; and like we all respect each other and respect others', like, ideas and stuff' (Dobia et al. 2013, p. 13).

Respect incorporates both what is said to others and what is said about others. Students are given opportunities to acknowledge each other's efforts and strengths such as the 'Guessing Good Game' where each person turns to the person on their left in the Circle and says 'I am guessing you are good at...' (Roffey 2014a, p. 34). The student then has to acknowledge this strength or identify another, thus owning what they are good at. Personal positives are the opposite of put-downs. When put-downs are not allowed in Circles, they are less likely to happen outside (Roffey and McCarthy 2013). Respectful conversations about others demonstrate that you believe in the best of them, you accept and value who they are, even though you may not always like their behaviour. In order to do this, you need to appreciate diversity: we all are different but have much in common and we all have something to offer.

There is a strong focus in the AGC on learning to respect Aboriginal culture. This was not something that was forced, but rather something that the girls themselves sought. When asked by the researchers what respect meant, the girls highlighted respect for Elders as both an important principle and an opportunity that they had learned and appreciated. The AGC's impact in cultivating an internalised sense of respect was highly valued by community Elders. 'The program basically encourages them to think about respect...respect is one of the major components of the activities' (Elder quoted from Roffey 2014b).

Equality The goal of the AGC is to empower students rather than control them (McCashen 2005). Equality is embedded in the AGC processes, where all the participants, the facilitator and any other adults sit in a Circle together. Everyone is invited to participate in all the activities, adults and students alike. It is not a time for a teacher to 'stand and deliver'. The proceedings are structured in a way that is Socratic rather than didactic, encouraging students to take responsibility. Everyone has the opportunity to have their turn and have a say. Although it might take a while for someone to contribute, each has a voice. This process also puts limitations on more dominant voices.

The principle of equality, and the way it is facilitated, is essential to the success of the AGC. The ability of the facilitator to sit back and be on the same level as everyone else is a critical skill for changing perceptions and behaviours. Changes were observed not only in the girls' behaviour but also in the staff. The Circle Solutions pedagogy enabled a shift in relationships that went well beyond the programmed sessions, as identified in the following comment from a key member of the school executive: 'It's not only been a learning experience for the girls, but the things that I have gotten out of all of this with regards to knowledge about Aboriginal people and relationships with the kids' (Dobia et al. 2013, p. 16). We see here how the Circles' emphasis on equality has cultivated the understanding needed to achieve greater equity for Aboriginal students within the school.

Asked what she had learned in one of the first AGC camps, one girl said: 'I learned I had a voice'. This is equally important for the girls and the adults

involved. Plans for further development of the AGC will extend this emphasis by ensuring that schools embed processes for working in partnership with community and enabling Aboriginal staff to build skills and confidence for taking up leadership roles.

The Close the Gap initiative was introduced with a goal of achieving health equality within a generation. It was based on a human rights approach that emphasises the social justice principles of fairness, access and recognition of the distinctive rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.). Social justice is also an essential principle of the AGC embedded within the notion of equality. Circles aim to promote power-sharing and citizenship.

6 Respect for Culture: Towards Two-Way Social and Emotional Learning

A growing body of evidence identifies the central importance of cultural identity for the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Dobia et al. 2013; Dudgeon et al. 2014b). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, negotiating a sense of identity requires navigating the ‘cultural interface’, where the struggle between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of knowing and being remains contentious and fraught (Nakata 2007). In the AGC pilot, the provision of space and support to explore a sense of cultural identity, with direct involvement of community Elders, was essential to building the girls’ sense of agency and cultural pride.

Based on the findings presented in this chapter, we argue that effective support for cultural identity in SEL programming needs to engage in a two-way approach to learning, that enables ‘both cultures ... to learn from each other ... [within] ... a neutral, negotiated space in which neither presumes superiority or authoritarian dominance’ (Purdie et al. 2011, p. xx). Two-way learning seeks the respectful integration of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous knowledge through a commitment to culturally responsive teaching and effective community partnerships. For this to occur, it is necessary to adopt a decolonising stance that interrogates the cultural assumptions underpinning psychoeducational practices and affirms the experiences and distinctive cultural values of the particular communities whose needs are to be served (Dudgeon and Walker 2015).

A two-way approach to building resilience should support the development of effective social and emotional skills while addressing the key issues of cultural identity and anti-racism that have been identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as essential to ‘growing children up strong’ and healing communities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation 2013). Though the AGC project began with a school request to address difficulties in working with Aboriginal girls, the commitment to working in culturally responsive ways and

engaging with community saw the pilot evolve towards a two-way learning approach. In this process, the flexible and open-ended methodology of Circle Solutions proved crucial for adapting to the needs expressed, yielding beneficial and mutually enhancing effects for the development of both social and emotional skills and cultural identity.

Respect for culture is essential to working respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in support of their social and emotional well-being. Developing an effective two-way approach to SEL requires engaging with communities from the outset to determine their needs and involvement. This process of engagement can be expected to be more complex in communities in which traditional languages, knowledges and socialisation practices are predominant. For these contexts especially, decolonising SEL practices necessitates questioning our assumptions about how social and emotional development occurs, rather than imposing models developed with other populations in other settings. Approaching SEL with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth from a two-way learning perspective can be expected to bring to light SEL competencies not previously thought of, thereby producing ‘richer theory and practice’ (Hecht and Shin 2015, p. 62) for the field as a whole.

7 Conclusion

Social and emotional development occurs in contexts marked by social disparities and cultural contestations, the effects of which are especially prominent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. To the extent that SEL programs assume universal norms for the development of social and emotional skills, they reinforce dominant cultural values and thereby risk contributing to the process of colonisation. By contrast, this chapter has highlighted the importance of cultural identity and community connectedness for social and emotional development among Aboriginal youth and proposed that culturally responsive SEL requires a two-way approach that encourages community involvement and incorporates Aboriginal cultural knowledge. In this vein, the successful example of the Aboriginal Girls Circle was underpinned by respect for culture and an inclusive and participatory methodology.

Acknowledgements The research presented in this chapter was informed and encouraged by the valued collaboration of our colleagues. In particular, we highlight the contributions of Virginia O’Rourke and Shirley Gilbert, as well as those of Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, Roberto Parada and Annie Daley.

Dobia’s research for the KidsMatter Indigenous Adaptation was funded by the KidsMatter partners.

Research into the Aboriginal Girls Circle was supported through a partnership grant involving Western Sydney University and NAPCAN, supported by the Origin Foundation.

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Early Secondary High School—A Mindfield[®] for Social and Emotional Learning

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Abstract The importance of social and emotional learning in the lives of children and young adults is widely acknowledged. How social and emotional learning is achieved effectively and efficiently among these groups is, however, far from clear especially within regular schools and classrooms. This chapter documents the challenges of implementing a social and emotional learning program at the junior secondary level in a large high school. The *Mindfields[®] High School Junior Program (HSJ)* is a social and emotional learning program designed for students aged 12–14 years. The eight-session strengths-based intervention intends to assist students to develop positive emotions, character, and engagement by understanding and regulating their emotions. There are three core components of the program: social and emotional skill development; mindfulness exercises; and group-based cooperative goal-setting and achievement. This chapter reports the initial trial of the prototype *Mindfields[®] HSJ* in four Year 8 classrooms in a high school located in a disadvantaged suburban community. The intervention used a train-the-trainer approach specifically requested by the school, with a senior teacher trained as the facilitator by the researchers. The school-based facilitator then provided a brief training program for four teachers who subsequently implemented the program. The prototype comprised eight modules presented over two school terms. One-to-one interviews were conducted with each classroom teacher at the conclusion of the

This manuscript is an original work that has not been submitted simultaneously to any other source nor has it been published anywhere else. All authors meet the criteria for authorship and have approved its submission.

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trial. The outcome of this trial highlights some of the difficulty in providing a social and emotional curriculum in a large high school located in a socially disadvantaged area. There are lessons learned from the trial including the difficulties associated with training classroom teachers to implement the program, primarily the importance of trialing and modifying prototype programs intended for introduction in whole-of-class situations.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · High school students · Mindfields® · Emotion regulation · Mindfulness · Implementation

1 Early Secondary High School—A Mindfield for Social and Emotional Learning

The field of educational research covers a vast array of methods, theories, and interventions. In a landmark piece of scholarship, Hattie (2012) drew attention to an abundance of investigations over what arguably might be the entire domain of school and other educational experiences. Crucial in his findings was the significant number of studies that showed little positive impact on students' social, emotional, and/or learning outcomes. In some cases, data showed that students were significantly disadvantaged by their involvement in some intervention studies.

Much of the educational research in the first half of the last century was conducted in laboratories and this prompted criticism from practicing educators. Practitioners argued that to be of value, research needed not only scientific validation but also implementation within everyday teaching and learning contexts. In other words, researchers had to address two essential conditions: successful application in school or early childhood settings and evidence of positive student outcomes. Researchers have, of course, responded by developing assessment tools, curricula, and interventions that support learning and development within a range of teaching-learning contexts (see Barb and Squire 2004; Brown 1992; Collins 1992).

In contrast to the controlled context of the laboratory, classrooms are dynamic. They vary in their physical environments, instructional methodologies employed, and the individual and group responses to the teaching and learning processes by instructor and students alike (Conroy et al. 2008). Classrooms constitute what Sandoval and Bell (2004) called a natural laboratory—perhaps a contradiction in terms.

Conducting research within a classroom setting necessitates bringing together a range of human, physical, and systemic supports that involve the students, their parents, teachers, school administration, education system, and school community. Each of these—either present or absent—will affect the outcome and determine the scientific rigor of any intervention (Conroy and Stitche 2005). The challenge for researchers is to demonstrate the ability to replicate the benefits of any new initiative under real-world conditions (Domitrovich and Greenberg 2000). However,

when evaluating research outcomes researchers can overlook unique participant responses that are not apparent in between-group differences, particularly when the intervention targets students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with preexisting characteristics that might cause adverse aptitude-by-treatment interactions.

This chapter reports the development and trialing of a social and emotional learning (SEL) prototype school-based intervention (*Mindfields*® *HSJ*) developed by the authors for a junior high school setting to be delivered by a classroom teacher in his/her own classroom. The program was adapted from the *Mindfields*® *Intensive* program, an individual six-session, self-regulatory intervention for youth at-risk.

During the developmental process, foremost in our minds was the inclusion of the five competencies outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2003) and strategies that would ensure integrity and fidelity of program implementation. The *Mindfields*® *HSJ* prototype was generated through consultation with school administrators, teachers, and high school students. Of priority for these stakeholders, was the difficult period encountered when transitioning from primary school to early secondary school, and as such the junior secondary years (12- to 14-year-olds) were targeted. The program was to be owned and managed by the implementing teachers and allowed for adaptations to procedures and practices within the context of classroom resources and operational constraints, provided they maintained the integrity of the program. These ideas and many others have been raised generously in the literature (see, e.g., Durlak 2015; Humphrey 2013). One of the criteria for the *Mindfields*® *HSJ* was a focus on disadvantaged students; hence, in the following section we deal briefly with the relevance of SEL for disadvantaged students.

1.1 Social and Emotional Learning and Disadvantaged Students

Classrooms are not only environments in which academic and intellectual skills, knowledge, and strategies are acquired. They are also important settings in which students' social and emotional development is promoted. In-class programs targeting positive behavior and interpersonal and social skills can reduce or eliminate the need for student withdrawal to receive specialist interventions (Sawyer et al. 2010) and expose all members of a class to positive SEL experiences. In this regard, a significant body of the literature has accumulated to show that children raised in circumstances of poverty, neglect, and conflict often commence school with substantial deficits in social-emotional competence and learning readiness that lead to lowered academic achievement (see, e.g., Dalton et al. 2007; Dodge and Pettit 2003; Elias and Haynes 2008; Heckman 2006; Hoff and Mitchell 2006; Humphrey 2013; Kaiser et al. 2000; McEvoy and Welker 2000; Solomon et al. 1997). The impact of such deficits can also affect these students' peers who do not come from disadvantaged backgrounds (Barth et al. 2004; Conduct Problems Prevention

Research Group 2004; Dodge and Pettit 2003; Snyder 2002). It follows that there is a primary need to support the development of non-cognitive skills to optimize life trajectories of those from socially disadvantaged situations.

Teachers are in a central position to promote SEL and assist all students to generalize newly learned skills (see, e.g., Han and Weiss 2005). Classroom research that involves the teachers as intervention facilitators can be of significant benefit to the teachers themselves as it provides opportunities to trial a range of strategies to assist students' learning in academic and social-emotional domains.

For many teachers, SEL is of considerable importance because it focuses on the development of skills and dispositions that affect the operation of their classrooms (Brackett and Rivers 2014). Building an SEL framework and sense of connectedness can also help students to focus on academic tasks (see Brackett and Rivers 2014). Heckman (2006) extended this idea by suggesting that there are economic and societal consequences when such investments are not made in at-risk youth. These include elevated school dropout rates for this group and low tertiary education entrance rates that can ultimately lead to a de-skilling of the workforce. In his economic analysis, Heckman argued that the key to overcoming this situation is early intervention. He drew attention to the importance of providing quality, universal, SEL interventions to youth as early as possible, a position reinforced by Zins and Elias (2007).

Of considerable importance is the growing body of the literature demonstrating the positive empirical validation of SEL (Durlak et al. 2015; Humphrey 2013). The present research sought guidance from existing SEL programs, of which there are many. The following section outlines the development of the *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ*.

1.2 Developing a Junior High School Program for Disadvantaged Students

In 2003–2005, the authors developed the *Mindfields*[®] *Intensive* program to support highly disadvantaged young people, especially those involved with the juvenile justice system. That program was designed as a six-session, self-regulatory intervention delivered one-on-one to young people in a highly controlled setting such as a youth justice detention center (Carroll et al. 2012). Program facilitators participate in an intensive training course conducted by the researchers over several days. They must pass six competency tasks and show evidence of successful implementation of the program with one young person before accreditation.

Facilitators receive a manual containing facilitator notes and resources with options for either fully scripted sessions or session outlines to allow for flexible delivery. At the end of each 2-h session, they complete an implementation integrity checklist to ensure adherence to the delivery of the program. Each session comprises a skill development component on self-regulatory life skills (e.g., social problem-solving, life mapping, and conflict resolution) and the setting and

achieving of a personal goal. An interactive computerized tool, The *Mindfields® Assessment Battery*, was developed to collect data on participants' progress. The efficacy of the program has been demonstrated with positive pre- and post-effects in a number of studies (see, e.g., Carroll et al. 2012a, b).

Mindfields® HSJ originated from numerous requests from school personnel to adapt the original *Mindfields®* program for delivery in regular junior high schools that included disadvantaged students. The Australian Research Council funded the project with support from the Department of Education and Training, Queensland. The project team collaborated with the school executive teams, classroom teachers, and high school students to develop a strengths-based intervention. *Mindfields® HSJ* drew upon the success of the *Mindfields® Intensive* program, incorporating successful social and emotional skills and expanding the focus on mindfulness skills; being in the moment became a key element of each module. An individual goal activity, a core component of the original *Mindfields® Intensive* program, involved individuals choosing a goal which they could achieve during the course of the six-week program. This activity was modified for the new *HSJ* prototype, to become a group goal completed as a whole-of-class activity. Therefore, three core components were selected as the foci, namely:

- building self- and social awareness skills, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills;
- participating in short here-and-now experiences without assigning judgment to their influence or effects (i.e., mindfulness); and
- developing skills to facilitate cooperative group goal-setting and achievement.

As might be expected from the brief description of the *Mindfields® Intensive* program, significant modifications were needed for application to a regular school setting. In the course of program development, logistical constraints within the schools led to three major amendments to the initial plan. First, school executives and teachers originally wanted the program to be fully interactive and online. Over the 2-year development process it was discovered that this was not practical due to limited information technology infrastructure at the schools (e.g., limited internet, limited access to computers and computer laboratories, and modest student IT skills). The prototype program was, therefore, modified as an offline program with resources that included a teacher manual, notes, and slides, and a student workbook.

Second, a train-the-trainer model was agreed as the most time- and cost-effective method of program delivery using a two-step process. First, faculty leaders in participating schools would be nominated and trained by the authors over two, 2-h workshops dealing with the program principles, aims, links to the online curriculum, and the content of each module. The faculty leaders then returned to their schools and trained the volunteering teachers to implement the program.

Third, schools wanted evidence of improvement in students' social connectedness and well-being. However, it was difficult to locate suitable assessment tools. While some exist, few are relevant for students in the targeted age group. There were also concerns about those instruments directly tapping the core elements of the program.

While the delivery methods sought by the schools were totally understandable, as investigators with experience in laboratory and classroom-based research, we were concerned about implementation where regular and focused monitoring of the classroom process, procedures, and student progress might not be possible. Our concerns about the crucial presence of program evaluation were moderated somewhat by several of Durlak's (2015) findings in regard to implementation science. We set four implementation criteria:

- The importance of professional development. We were mindful that school leaders were undertaking the training and monitoring, roles that are typically undertaken by the researchers themselves. We were interested in the extent to which the training of the school faculty leaders was effective in communicating the aims, objectives, processes, and procedures of *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* to the classroom teachers.
- The multidimensionality of implementation and the relevance of *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* to the students. We needed to ascertain the extent to which the program engaged the target audience and what effect(s) the program had, if any, on the students and their teachers.
- Implementation exists along a continuum. We wanted to ascertain the extent to which *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* was delivered within a junior high school and for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In other words, we were interested in the quality of implementation and what modifications the teachers thought necessary for their students.
- Program adaptations are common within schools. We recognized that provided the key components of the program are delivered in the way *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* was conceived, adaptations might be practical and relevant; hence, we were keen to ensure that the fidelity of the program was maintained.

These issues all relate to effective implementation rather than student outcomes per se. Therefore, it was decided to forego the collection of pre- and post-intervention assessment data during this trial stage. The primary aim was to determine whether this prototype of *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* was a translation of the original program suitable for large student groups and delivered and managed by classroom teachers. The best method for investigating this aim was to undertake one-to-one interviews with the teachers who implemented the prototype.

Due to the constraints under which the prototype was being trialed, it was decided to introduce the program in one junior high school context only. This would provide guidance in regard to any fundamental changes needed prior to the involvement of other schools.

2 Implementing a SEL Program in Regular Classrooms

2.1 *The Setting*

Four classes of Year 8 students from one state high school were involved in the initial trial of the *Mindfields*® *HSJ*. Classes 1 and 4 comprised 25 students each and were taught by female teachers. Male teachers taught classes 2 and 3 with 28 students each.

Teacher 1 was 27 years of age with four years of teaching experience. She taught the class for personal development and an additional 16 class periods per week in other curriculum areas. She had good rapport with her class, and the students were generally willing to express their ideas during class lessons.

Teacher 2 was 37 years of age with 14 years of teaching experience. He taught the students for the personal development class in two, 70-min periods per week. He also taught soccer, mathematics, and science. He described the class as very cooperative although other teachers had somewhat different experiences with this group.

Teacher 3 was a physical education teacher aged 48 years with 17 years of teaching experience. He implemented the program only within the personal development class. He was moved to a different class after the trial due to the resignation of another teacher.

Teacher 4 was in her first year of teaching. She was 24 years of age. She taught the personal development class and an additional 10 h a week covering English, Mathematics, and Humanities. She described the class as very unmotivated and a difficult group to engage in classroom activities.

2.2 *Mindfields*® *HSJ* Intervention

Many SEL programs include five components established by CASEL (2003). These are self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills. The social and personal capabilities required for positive emotional development are addressed in the Australian National Curriculum and are based on the five components of CASEL. These have been demonstrated to be closely linked to academic achievement and overall well-being.

The content of *Mindfields*® *HSJ* is embedded within the Australian National Curriculum with each module being mapped to personal/social capabilities. These capabilities focus on students' understanding of themselves and others and learning to manage relationships and personal well-being. As students develop skills in these areas, it is argued that achievement of those skills enhances capabilities in other areas.

Common among programs that specifically target SEL is a general aim to enhance student's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes to build identity, positive relationships with others, and enhance decision-making and problem-solving skills (Brackett and Rivers 2014). Han and Weiss (2005) argued that there are four key factors necessary if a program is to be successful and sustainable. It must be: (a) deemed appropriate by school staff; (b) demonstrated as being effective; (c) implemented with minimal resources and maintained beyond the initial introduction; and (d) flexible and adaptable.

The eight, one-hour sessions (i.e., modules) involved a combination of group collaboration and individual self-reflection experiences. The theme/content and key outcomes of the eight one-hour sessions are shown in Table 1 and comprise cognitive, behavioral, and emotional processes to enhance positive relationships and provide explicit teaching around responsible decision-making and skills for social problem-solving.

Each session began with a mindfulness activity to assist students to become focused on the here-and-now and ready to attend to the lesson. A group goal was established through a whole-of-class discussion during Session 1, and it became the

Table 1 Content and intended outcomes of the mindfields[®] HSJ sessions

Session	Theme/content	Intended outcomes
1. Where I stand now	Values, readiness to change, self-evaluation, identifying the group goal	To identify personal values and understand the changes occur as we journey through life
2. Setting goals toward a valued life	Goal-setting follow-up	To understand goals and goal-setting and differentiating goals and values
3. How I got here	Identity, life mapping, social awareness	To learn how to map your life, to understand your current position and how your identity is formed
4. Understanding emotions	The brain and emotions, emotion recognition	To enhance emotion recognition and the impact that emotions have on us
5. Managing emotions	Emotion regulation, self-awareness, thought restructuring	To understand the link between thoughts, emotions, and actions and how thinking in certain ways can create barriers to enjoying life
6. Overcoming obstacles	Problem-solving, social connectedness, responsible decision-making	To understand the six-stage process of problem-solving, and learning when to use it in difficult situations and select appropriate solutions
7. A healthy me	Coping skills, resilience, self-advocacy, relationship skills	To learn about positive coping skills and the benefits of assertive behavior when in peer pressure situations
8. Looking outward	Self-evaluation, self-management	To reinforce the skills already learned and understand the concept of future goal-setting

platform for learning and applying newly learned strategies throughout the following sessions. The group goal for Class 1, for example, involved planning and implementing a physical education activity for students at a local primary school. The key outcomes anticipated from the goal were enhancement of social connectedness by working together to plan the physical education activity and a sense of self-worth and achievement after the successful implementation of the planned activity. Goals were intended to encourage students to look outside of themselves and be of service to others, which in this example involved students facilitating an event for the enjoyment of younger children in their community.

2.3 Interviews with Teachers

After completing the eight modules, each teacher took part in an individual interview with a member of the research team that lasted approximately one hour. An open-ended interview focused on capturing information about the group goal, program implementation, perceived changes in students' behavior, challenges for the teacher and students, what students enjoyed, and what changes might be appropriate if the program was repeated.

All interviews began with an open-ended request: "Tell me what happened during the *Mindfields*® *HSJ* program" and evolved into a general discussion and question-and-answer session. The interviews were tape-recorded and fully transcribed and the analysis proceeded generally along the lines recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998), who refer to open and axial coding and interpretation.

There were four evaluation/coding phases. The first sought to correct transcription errors. The second involved the assignment of interview content to the four implementation criteria described above, that is, the effectiveness of the train-the-trainer model, engagement of students and teachers, modifications made to suit the characteristic of the student cohort, and the fidelity concerning the inclusion of core program ingredients. The third phase involved re-classification of comments on an interview-by-interview basis. This sought to establish coding consistency across all interview sessions to ensure that the same or very similar comments from several participants were being assigned the same category. The final phase affirmed the classification of interviewee responses.

3 The Impact of the Trial on Students and Teachers

The first notable observation—not entirely unexpected—was the considerable differences that existed across the four classrooms. Teachers had differing years of teaching experience, and class groups varied in the need for reactive behavior management. There was a wide ability range among the students. These differences emerge as key issues affecting the success or otherwise of the trial. Results are

presented in four sections corresponding to the four implementation criteria mentioned above.

3.1 Effectiveness of the Train-the-Trainer Model

All four teachers stated that they understood what the program was trying to achieve and gained a lot from the training manual, although not necessarily from the actual training sessions themselves. The teachers were critical of the very brief introduction they were given, which was perceived as more about the administration (e.g., signing on to the computer network) than program delivery.

Teacher 4 exemplifies these observations. *“We had a bit of a professional development on it the week before we started and that was good but a lot of it was about setting up the actual accounts and stuff like that. I feel like we were just kind of told, ‘Okay, now go read the modules.’”* Teachers agreed that considerably more professional development was needed to unpack the concepts and the ways in which they could be communicated to their students. Teacher 4 also wanted more about the content and *“more of an idea what the end goal is.”* This was also reflected in Teacher 2’s comments: *“I think maybe a little bit more guidance would be nice, I think, or even if we have ... a briefing amongst the group, or possibly have someone [present to the group] who has a little bit more knowledge about where we’re going and what the key messages you want to get across to the kids.”*

Teacher 3 was slightly more positive about the training. *“I remember going to a training but I can’t really remember to be honest. I mean at the end of the day, all I remember is that after walking out of there I had enough information to do what I had to do. It took a bit of playing around with the first couple of modules but once again, that’s just getting used to something new. ... I walked out of there thinking that it was going to be something fairly easy because the booklets were all there, so I didn’t think like I was under-prepared.”*

Teacher 1 reported similar experiences but also the sense that her professionalism would compensate. *“I felt there was too much information at once and it was, like, ‘Wow. Where do I start?’ But you probably couldn’t do it in another way. I think if you just manage your own personal time well, then you’ll be able to present it but then there’s obviously so many other factors in that like your kids on the day, and the school environment.”*

3.2 Engagement of Students and Teachers

All teachers reported different levels of engagement within their classes, making a distinction between the effectiveness of the program for students with low versus higher skill levels. Those in the first group generally presented behavior problems and had low literacy levels.

Teacher 4 (who was in her first year of teaching) reported most difficulties presenting the program. Those whom she described as having learning difficulties often did not understand many of the ideas and concepts being presented and they also needed considerable coaching to apply those ideas to their present and later lives. For example, she said, *“They didn’t really connect with the ideas behind it. I tried taking some time out explaining, ‘This is why we’re doing this. This is how this is supposed to benefit you’ but a lot of them just didn’t seem to get the concept of understanding mindfulness.”* She went on, *“The kids that get angry of ‘Why are we doing this?’—they’re the kids that I feel would really benefit from it and I didn’t see any change from them because it was just an hour to kill for them on a Thursday afternoon.”*

In contrast, the more capable students understood the concepts and were able to generalize those ideas to aspects of their later lives. Teacher 4 again, *“They would say ‘Ok. I’m going to try and think mindfully from now on ...’ those weren’t the kids that would need to do it. You know?”*

Teachers 1, 2, and 3 did not reflect the same degree of difficulty. Teacher 2, for example, said, *“I don’t think there were any parts that they [the students] disliked,”* and Teacher 3 reported that implementation went very smoothly: *“I didn’t have any issue with it ... the kids would walk in; the work booklets would be handed out. So they knew [what to do] straight away and they never complained.”* And Teacher 1: *“They enjoyed organising [the sports games that were part of the group goal], getting into groups with their friends ... They felt accomplished from just small things like where they did it and then I’d print it on the screen so they could see what it looked like typed up.”*

Teacher 1’s group appeared to be the most engaged. *“Some of the concepts, I really had to delve into with a bit more information because they’re, like, ‘What is that?’ ‘What does that mean?’”* In the goal activity the students in this class were largely self-sufficient in both planning and delivering the sports activity.

3.3 Modifications to Suit the Characteristics of the Student Cohort

All teachers deviated from the program’s implementation schedule. All stated that they were committed to the program. All expressed their support and were keen to have the opportunity to provide a program because they thought that it had the potential to improve classroom dynamics and improve students’ learning outcomes.

The most common criticism of the program was the lack of time within the delivery schedule for teachers to explain the concepts to students who were not familiar with them. They agreed that there was no time for reflection, especially in regard to mindfulness. This had the significant flow-on effect of either re-ordering tasks, cutting short the presentation of some aspects of any module, skipping them altogether, or extending the time allowed (and needed) to complete a particular task.

Teacher 1 thought that mindfulness was crucial to the success of the program and introduced that concept and activity at the beginning of every lesson “*whether it was the beginning of the module or not. I did a mindfulness activity.*”

Teachers 2 and 4 decided on the relevant aspects of the program for their students once it was obvious that a module could not be completed within the allotted time. When asked about how this problem might be overcome, Teacher 4 said, “*It would probably have to be really simplified and probably given double the time ... I would definitely give more time for each of the modules because sometimes there was a lot to do.*”

Teachers 2 and 3 had problems with technology, and Teacher 3 decided to generate additional worksheets to focus on specific aspects of the program. Teacher 2 also added additional material to make the content relevant to students’ experiences.

3.4 Inclusion of Core Program Ingredients

None of the teachers reported completing the program as it was designed primarily due to the amount of information contained in the program and the time needed to communicate the key skills to the students. Mindfulness was especially difficult to explain to students with limited experience and cognitive skills. All teachers expressed some reservations about mindfulness, as Teacher 1 explained, “*I personally did not understand what was trying to be achieved but initially for the kids, they didn’t really quite get it. Like, well, ‘What’s mindfulness? ... How is this going to improve our life?’*” Teacher 1 was willing to persevere and be patient and the students responded positively.

All teachers perceived the group goal as the core of the program, the place where links could be made between students’ thoughts, emotions, and actions. Teacher 2 expressed it like this: “*I guess with the Mindfields[®] program, the idea was to teach kids skills. Basically, making them aware of their own self, strengths, and weaknesses and that sort of stuff. And teaching them skills about how to deal with different situations and scenarios.*” Generally, however, the teachers were not convinced that they had covered the core components. As Teacher 3 explained, there were gains to be made even though the structure of the program was not strictly followed: “*I found with my group, we’d get side-tracked all the time, which was cool. You’d just let it go because they were talking or they’d get into an activity, especially some of the drawing ones and sometimes they wanted to draw other pictures and other things or feelings, so ... you’d let it go for 20 min because they’re on task. They’re doing something they like and even though they might not realise it, by the time they drew their pictures and told someone about it, they’re kind of unwittingly telling them how they’re feeling. You know, they don’t realise they’re doing it and that’s why the activity is good.*”

Based on a careful review of the interview contents, it is difficult to conclude that the program was presented by any of the teachers with fidelity. We recognize that

aspects of the key components were delivered although not necessarily in the way or the order as conceived. While all teachers adhered to the spirit of the program, it is not clear whether their adaptations benefited the students or diluted the impact of the intervention.

4 Changing Classroom Dynamics Through SEL

Evaluating educational interventions undertaken in schools are at best complicated by the practicalities of working with teachers and students in what is essentially an uncontrolled research environment, in classroom contexts, which are all different by their nature. This is exacerbated if teachers are also cast into the role of trainers. If they are well trained, embrace the spirit and logic of the intervention, and are regularly monitored and supported, the likelihood of success is high. Findings of the present research indicate the need for modifications to existing implementation approaches for future success and consistency of delivery. These are discussed in two sections corresponding generally to the four implementation criteria mentioned above.

4.1 Implications for Practitioners

The original *Mindfields*® *Intensive* program involves a comprehensive and rigorous training program. In the present project, seeking a translation for a classroom-based and delivered syllabus required modifications that accommodated a range of pressures that affect all schools and their teachers. Notwithstanding this, the research team aimed to respond to the school's concerns about interference to the school day that occurs when teachers are withdrawn from their classroom for training and also about the impact of external providers in the classroom. The relevance of these constraints is recognized.

The train-the-trainer approach and the subsequent teacher training was less than ideal to prepare the trainers or teachers for the challenges associated with the delivery of *Mindfields*® *HSJ* in the way intended. During the interviews, teachers acknowledged that while the program was easy to follow, intuitive, and important for student social and emotional growth, they either felt underprepared to deliver the program content and/or realized that they would need to study the teacher's manual carefully to familiarize themselves with the structure and content of the program before they began. Additionally, they were concerned about access to, and the reliability of, available technology that was intended to support program delivery, and felt time constraints due to the parallel delivery of the school curricular and of associated administrative demands.

A question remains, of course, "What are the implications of our findings for practitioners. How might these limitations be overcome?" One of the authors addressed this in a classroom-based project some years ago (see Ashman 1992;

Ashman and Conway 1993). Their methods involved a whole-of-school orientation not unlike approaches taken by Rivers et al. (2013) and Axford et al. (2011). In the context of the present report, a whole-of-school approach might begin with an introduction to *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* via a professional development session usually scheduled in all schools prior to the beginning of the academic year. This would provide a conceptual basis upon which any teacher might learn about the program and how it might be presented to the students. A trainer program (for faculty leaders) might then focus on the practicalities of how they might support the teachers during program delivery and monitoring. This would be followed by the teachers' training presented by members of the research team in collaboration with the in-school trainer, with the content for each contribution agreed beforehand.

The need for researchers to be directly involved with the delivery of the training, at least initially, would provide greater adherence to the program contents. The researchers also need to be more involved throughout the delivery of the program in order to provide feedback and support and to ensure that the program is being implemented with integrity. As teachers become more proficient, the researchers withdraw from the school.

Such an approach would address administrators' concerns about school control over the process. In addition, this approach provides a general professional development session about SEL to all teachers within a school, minimizes the presence of the research team on the school campus, and ensures that the cooperating teachers have opportunities to seek clarification and assistance if they perceive complications with program delivery. These are all relevant issues for practitioners.

From the researchers' perspective the approach provides for accuracy in training, ensures that the key components of the program are emphasized, maintains regular contact with the in-school trainer and the teachers about how the program might be adapted to suit specific situations and students consistent with the fidelity of the program, and maintains a regular flow of qualitative data from those involved about implementation and complications.

4.2 Future Directions for Research and Practice

We have considered future directions in the context of the present project. An essential component of *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* is that it is manualized, fully scripted, and provides a variety of activities appropriate for students aged 12–14 years. The detailed manual provides teachers with an understanding of the intended outcomes of each module while providing activity options, when working with a heterogeneous group. These program resources contributed to addressing the differential engagement levels of students within the present research.

Teacher feedback identified a range of activities that successfully engaged students with different learning needs; and areas where a need exists for program

refinements, specifically for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Future refinements will focus on whether changes need to be made to certain activities to address literacy and engagement levels of students from disadvantaged backgrounds with varying behavioral and learning difficulties.

Teachers discussed the benefits of the activities concerning the group goal. This is very pleasing as the group goal is seen as fundamental to the *Mindfields*® *HSJ* as it is a core foundation for learning and applying newly learned strategies to enhance social connectedness, a sense of self-worth, and social responsibility to others. While the value of mindfulness was not initially recognized by the students (indeed, it was seen as a difficult concept to explain), over time three of the four classrooms embraced mindfulness-based practices at the beginning of each lesson. Again this is a fundamental element of the *Mindfields*® *HSJ*, with mindfulness training gaining increasing recognition as an effective approach for teaching psychological and emotional well-being and managing stress, depression and anxiety as it targets attention and emotion processing capacities (Hofmann et al. 2010).

It is apparent that further modifications are required to the present syllabus and approach to address differences in students' abilities and backgrounds. All cooperating teachers during the trial adapted the program to meet the perceived needs of their students. As this was an important variation to the script, having a range of explanations for the various concepts within the resource package along with practical examples of their application would expedite the learning process for all students regardless of their skill and knowledge levels.

In the present trial, teachers were excited about the content of the program, although they were unsure about how they could have delivered it within the timelines provided for each module. One way of achieving this is to shorten or condense the content although this is unlikely to lead to program success, as Sawyer et al. (2010) have argued. They suggested that a brief dose of intervention is often a guarantee of disappointment and in the present project it was unlikely to lead to students' understanding of the key program components or introduce opportunities to apply them to their day-to-day lives. An alternative approach will examine whether modules need to provide flexibility in the delivery of core content to accommodate a variety of student ability levels and to alleviate the time pressures that teachers experienced. For example, content will be modified to identify essential, recommended, and supplementary material.

Linked with the length of any intervention are costs involved in conducting research. The findings of our trial confirm a view that to provide fidelity to the research, consideration needs to be given to the timeframe of any intervention, the amount of training and teacher release time, recruitment of large samples, and production of resources to address the needs of all participants. When operating from limited research funds, this can prove to be a challenge and may have serious effects on the overall effectiveness of the study (see, e.g., Sawyer et al. 2010).

These are important considerations in the future rollout of the *Mindfields*® *HSJ*. In addition to the need for appropriate teacher training and with on-the-ground involvement by researchers, there is a need to consider how to respond to the

changes that occur in the delivery of the program in dynamic classrooms and heterogeneous student groups (Sandoval and Bell 2004).

Research requires empirical control, which is against changing the planned intervention. A review of the current research protocol for implementation is required to ensure: program relevance to all students of high versus low ability; support to the classroom teachers during the lessons; achievable timeframes for implementation and program content; understanding the relevance and important elements of the program for students such as mindfulness; excellent preparation of lessons that set the stage for the program; following up skill development in other curriculum/social areas; and ongoing support for continuation for the program post-implementation.

4.3 Concluding Comments

We began this chapter with reference to Hattie (2012). One disturbing result reported in his monograph was the number of educational interventions that had either no positive impact on the targeted research cohort, or a negative one. How could this have occurred? One would need to return to the original reports on which Hattie based his meta-analyses but it would not seem unreasonable to speculate that there were shortcomings in the development and implementation of those initiatives that were not identified and rectified before releasing the program for general use, or validation.

Hattie's (2012) revelations were significant prompts for the present trial of a *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* prototype. The success of any untested intervention depends upon a substantial review of the training and delivery processes along with comprehensive amendments of the modules, the systematic delivery of content, and the provision of ongoing support for teachers during and after the initial implementation. This could only be achieved by a careful and critical assessment of a prototype.

There is little doubt that SEL is important for every child, and especially for those students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In theory, universal classroom-based programs should enhance the social and emotional well-being of all children involved, regardless of level of risk or disadvantage. It is our hope that this first assessment of *Mindfields*[®] *HSJ* will lead to the release of a program that has integrity and fidelity. If this occurs, it would not fall into Hattie's category of programs that have zero or negative effects.

Acknowledgements We would like to acknowledge the teachers and school executive staff at our partner schools who contributed to this research, and the support of the Queensland Department of Education and Training. This article contains the views of the authors and does not represent the views of the Queensland Department of Education and Training.

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The Geelong Grammar Positive Psychology Experience

Meredith O'Connor and Georgiana Cameron

Abstract The emergence of the positive psychology movement has seen a significant redirection of scientific inquiry towards the exploration of optimal human functioning, and interest is now growing in how this knowledge can be applied in real-world settings. Positive Education refers to the application of positive psychology in schools. Social emotional learning (SEL) is a critical component of Positive Education, though Positive Education also incorporates a focus on other factors such as character strengths and the development of meaning and purpose. Geelong Grammar School (GGS) is an independent, Anglican, co-educational, boarding, and day school. It is located across four campuses in Victoria, Australia, with over 1500 students. In 2008, during a 6 month visit by Professor Martin Seligman and with extensive support from his colleagues, GGS began implementing positive psychology as a whole-school approach. Positive Education as implemented at GGS seeks to combine principles of positive psychology with best practice teaching and educational paradigms to promote optimal development and flourishing in the school setting. This chapter discusses (1) the GGS 'road map' to implementing Positive Education as a whole-school approach, (2) ongoing research and evaluation efforts to further understand the impact of the programme at the level of staff, students, and the broader school community, (3) key practice issues, and (4) challenges and opportunities for further programme development. Positive Education continues to experience growing momentum both in Australia and internationally, and holds promise as a means of contributing to the well-being of school communities.

Keywords Positive education · Positive psychology · Social and emotional learning · Interventions

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1 Positive Education at Geelong Grammar School

1.1 *What Is Positive Education?*

Schools are one of the most important developmental contexts in young peoples' lives and can be a key source of the skills and competencies that support their capacity for successful adaptation (Hamilton and Hamilton 2009). Capitalising on this potential, Positive Education is a recently developed paradigm that, broadly speaking, refers to the application of positive psychology in educational contexts (Green et al. 2011). Seligman (2011) further defines Positive Education as having a dual focus on academic learning and the promotion of well-being. In addition, best practice teaching and educational theories make significant and transformative contributions to the application of positive psychology in educational contexts. At a broad level, Positive Education could be described as bringing together the science of positive psychology with best practice teaching to encourage and support schools and individuals within their communities to flourish (Norrish et al. 2013).

Positive Education aligns with the broad definition of social and emotional learning (SEL) as a process for helping children and even adults develop the fundamental skills for functioning effectively (CASEL 2013), and relates to each of the five SEL key competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Overall, there are many similarities and areas of overlap between Positive Education and SEL programmes as implemented in schools. SEL is a critical component of Positive Education, though Positive Education incorporates a focus on other factors such as character strengths and the development of meaning and purpose (Noble and McGrath 2008). In addition, both SEL and Positive Education include explicit teaching as well as focusing on whole-school change across culture, policy, and curriculum. As such, there is significant potential for Positive Education and SEL to become further integrated in the future. For example, SEL research has provided much needed insight into implementation issues that are equally relevant to Positive Education.

1.2 *Implementation Approach*

One of the first applications of Positive Education as a whole-school approach was at Geelong Grammar School. The School has been implementing Positive Education since 2008, when Professor Martin Seligman was in residence for 6 months and trained staff in delivering positive psychology programmes. As the first school to implement Positive Education as a whole-school approach, there are valuable lessons that can be learned from this school's experience. However, there are also unique characteristics of this school (e.g. a high level of resources) that mean that careful consideration is needed before generalising this approach to other school settings. In addition, whilst GGS is further along in the implementation

process due to the number of years that efforts have been ongoing, it is well recognised that Positive Education will continue to change and evolve as new evidence comes to light and practices continue to be developed and strengthened.

At GGS, staff were initially provided with the opportunity to experience and apply positive psychology techniques in their own lives, before planning a programme of teaching across the school to support student well-being. This emphasis on staff ‘living’ positive psychology strategies before delivering teaching to students continues to be a core pillar of implementation. As Jennings and Greenberg (2009) have argued in relation to SEL, students’ learning contexts are strongly influenced by their teacher’s social and emotional competence and well-being. Along the same line, the effectiveness of teaching Positive Education is strongly connected to how well teachers and school staff understand and model these skills.

The whole-school approach adopted by GGS targets six domains viewed as central to positive mental health: emotional well-being (building positive emotional experiences and developing healthy responses to difficult emotions), engagement (engagement and immersion in activities), accomplishment (striving for and achieving meaningful outcomes), purpose (engaging in activities of service to others), relationships (social and emotional skills to support healthy relationships), and health (establishing habits that support positive physical and psychological health across the lifespan; Norrish et al. 2013). The school implements a range of programmes and initiatives to promote these domains of well-being, which continue to grow and develop in response to new research in the field, evaluations of programme effectiveness, and student and staff feedback (Norrish et al. 2013). Again, the specific context of GGS has shaped this approach to Positive Education, and the insights gained from the experiences within this distinctive setting should only be generalised to other schools with careful thought about their needs and circumstances.

The explicit teaching of Positive Education at GGS—where students attend regular, timetabled lessons on Positive Education in the same way that they attend Maths and History classes—now occurs in Year 5 through to Year 10 of the school. Initially based on the Penn Resiliency Program (Brunwasser et al. 2009) and the Strath Haven Program (Seligman et al. 2009), the explicit teaching programme reflects a diverse range of skills and knowledge covering the breadth of the targeted domains. Positive Education is also implicitly embedded into the academic curriculum across a broad range of subjects, creating links between positive psychology concepts and traditional areas of curricula. Specific examples of activities within explicit and implicit programmes are provided in Table 1. Teaching pedagogy can be considered another strand of the implicit teaching of Positive Education; for example, the way teachers praise their students, how they structure lessons for optimal engagement and through integrating mindfulness practices into their class routines.

In addition, the development of positive organisational culture requires school-wide practices implemented from a systemic perspective (Norrish et al. 2013). Across the campuses, the vast majority of staff—both teaching and non-teaching—participate in multi-day training programmes to develop their knowledge and application of Positive Education to their personal lives and in their

Table 1 Target domains within Positive Education and examples of strategies targeting each domain at GGS

Domain	Explicit curriculum example	Implicit curriculum example	Pedagogy example	Staff development example	Embedding within policy and practice example
Emotions <i>Experience of positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, and hope</i>	In the Year 10 curriculum, students learn about broaden and build theory (Fredrickson 2001) to develop their understanding of the benefits and importance of positive emotion	When studying texts and media, how character's emotions influence behaviour and perception are explored	Priming of particular emotions such as awe and gratitude prior to beginning a problem-solving or creative task	Resources distributed about the significant effects of savouring positive experiences	Meetings began by asking staff members 'What is Working Well' to improve problem-solving
Engagement <i>Interest, engagement, curiosity and absorption</i>	Year 7 students are taught the Goldilocks concept of 'not too hard, not too easy' as a way of teaching flow (optimal engagement)	Reflection on states of flow within extracurricular activities like sport, art, music	Consider characteristics of flow when planning lessons, for example, immediate feedback, challenge--skill balance	Staff attend workshops on ways to promote flow states at work as a way of protecting against stress, for example, taking on new challenges, minimising distractions	Deliberately foster intrinsic motivation of staff through adding criteria to Professional Development Performance discussions and planning
Accomplishment <i>Striving for and achieving meaningful outcomes</i>	Growth and fixed mindsets introduced to students providing them with tools to nurture a growth mindset	When introducing statistics in mathematics, Dweck's growth and fixed mindset survey used to devise the average and distribution for their class and discuss	Teachers use praise focused on effort and process rather than overall abilities or outcomes	Teaching and non-teaching staff attend a training workshop to develop their understanding of mindsets	Promote, support, and provide opportunities for professional learning and further university study for staff members (e.g. study leave)
Purpose	In Year 10, students are asked to commit to one	Community service programmes (i.e.	When introducing a new unit of work, the teacher	Training workshops aimed at exploring	Host Appreciative Inquiry Summit with

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Domain	Explicit curriculum example	Implicit curriculum example	Pedagogy example	Staff development example	Embedding within policy and practice example
<i>Contributing to others and the community</i>	short-term and one long-term project that would add meaning and purpose to their lives by helping others	volunteering) with reflection on purpose and meaning of doing such work	helps contextualise why this is important to students and work with students to create meaning	teachers core beliefs and values and how these relate to the work they do	staff to assist school in devising purpose statement and overall vision
<i>Relationships and emotional skills to foster positive relationships</i>	Using role-plays and discussion, explore how we support relationships in the good times (e.g. celebrating others' successes) and the hard times (e.g. empathy, compassion)	In humanities, look at ways to support trusting, forgiving and healthy relationships across differences	Teachers taking the time to greet and get to know students	Value of responding to others' good news with authentic, active and supportive interest (Cable and Reis 2010) taught to staff using role-play	Restorative practices and policy embedded within approach to behaviour management
<i>Health Optimal physical and psychological health</i>	Teaching students realistic thinking and problem-solving skills across multiple year levels	Ask students to write creatively about resilient figures across history, poetry, and the arts	When confronting a problem as a class or team, e.g. behavioural issue, use problem-solving approach	Running workshops on the skill of help-seeking and drawing upon others when we are struggling	Offer staff and students opportunities to exercise and take breaks across the day
<i>Character strengths Knowledge and use of personality traits that are morally valued</i>	Students complete the Values In Action (VIA) Youth survey and reflect on new their strengths in new ways	In History, students explore the topic of genealogy by interviewing family members about their own and relatives' strength	Help to motivate and engage students through aligning tasks with character strengths	Department and work teams come up with collective strengths and consider ways to nurture particular team strengths	The language of character strengths embedded into speeches at assemblies and other events

work at the school. Ongoing professional development workshops in Positive Education are provided for teaching and non-teaching staff, each term to develop their individual understanding and practice. The school strives to create a community of practice where all members embrace learning and feel responsible for the effective implementation of Positive Education. Consistent with a whole-school approach seeking to engage all stakeholders in the school community, parents are also invited to take part in workshops and multi-day, residential training programmes to support their understanding of Positive Education and use of PPIs. Training staff and parents in Positive Education means that even those not involved with the explicit teaching of Positive Education can act as role models for students and contribute to the development of a positive organisational culture.

A focus on character strengths, operationalised through the Values in Action survey (Park and Peterson 2006), underpins all of these efforts (Norrish et al. 2013). The character development of children and young people has long been popular within education, yet prior to the establishment of VIA there was no adequate theoretical framework to guide programme development and the effectiveness of character education programmes was questioned (Park and Peterson 2006). Peterson and Seligman (2004) define character strengths as a universally recognised subset of personality traits that are morally valued. From a strengths perspective, everyone has unique abilities and capacities that can help them to flourish and perform at their best (Wood et al. 2011). Individuals who use their strengths have been found to report increased vitality and subjective and psychological well-being (Govindji and Linley 2007; Linley et al. 2010), increased progress towards their goals (Linley et al. 2010), and enhanced resilience after stressful events (Peterson and Seligman 2003). Research continues to support the relevance of strengths in enhancing children's well-being and healthy development (Park and Peterson 2008; Rashid et al. 2013).

2 Research Directions in Positive Education

Positive Education is underpinned by a growing body of research on the nature and promotion of optimal developmental pathways. As a relatively new field, many questions remain, the most pressing of which is rigorous evaluation to explore whether Positive Education programmes achieve their desired outcomes and if so for whom and for how long (Norrish and O'Connor 2015). Additional questions include the return on investment for the significant resources required to implement Positive Education programmes; how to engage and maintain staff interest in Positive Education; and how to continue to integrate Positive Education with other well-established bodies of knowledge in education (such as approaches to fostering student–teacher relationships). Below we describe findings from some recent studies conducted at GGS, which are only the beginning in starting to address the many remaining questions requiring investigation. See Norrish and O'Connor (2015) for an overview of earlier research findings.

2.1 *Student Well-Being*

The most obvious question is whether Positive Education ‘works’, and if so for whom and in what circumstances. At the student level, independent evaluation efforts are currently under way which will provide invaluable insight into how Positive Education programmes influence students’ thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Vella-Brodrick et al. 2014). GGS students from Years 9 to 11 are being followed and compared to a group of students similar in socio-economic status from a range of independent (that is, non-government) schools in Melbourne. A mixed methods approach to tracking well-being over time has been taken, including surveys, biosamples, focus groups, and experience sampling to understand how students are applying skills ‘in the moment’. Results from the first year of the 3 year follow-up with these students suggest that the Year 9 Timbertop programme (which is a fully residential programme focused heavily on physical activity and challenge) is associated with substantial gains in well-being for students over the course of the year, even for those students who are new to the school that year. These positive effects decreased over Years 10 and 11, though students’ overall well-being remained higher than the control group at all points. Continued follow-up with the Year 9 students will allow further understanding into the impact of the programme on students’ well-being over time. Given the distinctive features of the GGS setting, these findings require replication in other school settings, and efforts are currently underway to explore the impact of the explicit curriculum in other schools.

Interest has also been growing in understanding the impact of Positive Education after students leave school. A key indicator of success for such programmes is the degree to which they provide ‘skills for life’ that generalise beyond the school environment. A recent study by O’Connor et al. (in press) examined the longer-term implications of adolescent positive mental health for successful young adult transitions. Data were drawn from one of the Australia’s longest running studies of social and emotional development (Australian Temperament Project; ATP) (Edwards et al. 2013). The ATP has followed, since 1983, a large representative community sample from infancy to 27–28 years of age. Positive mental health at 15–16 years was found to be associated with indicators of career progression and taking on citizenship responsibilities over a decade later at 27–28 years. This suggests that successful transitions into young adult roles and responsibilities may be facilitated by targeted mental health promotion interventions designed to both foster positive mental health and address mental health difficulties in adolescence.

To better understand how students are using Positive Education skills during this critical period of emerging adulthood, Stevanovic (2015) interviewed GGS graduates in their first year out of school. Qualitative analysis showed that all participants were continuing to use Positive Education skills to some extent once they had left the secondary school setting, though they did not always consider them explicitly as Positive Education. Commonly identified factors that helped young people to continue to use the skills were the value they placed on the skills and the

influence of teachers, in particular where they had a trusting relationship with their teacher and thus placed more weight on their endorsement of Positive Education skills. The salient barriers to using a range of Positive Education skills identified to varying degrees by students were a lack of perceived applicability of skills to their current challenges, limited understanding of the purpose of these skills and how to apply them in practice, and lack of external encouragement to use the skills in their new environment. These findings suggest that Positive Education programmes can be helpful in preparing young people for the challenges of the Emerging Adulthood period. However, prolonged use of these skills may be dependent on helping students to generalise skills to the new challenges encountered during Emerging Adulthood. Further research to examine opportunities to support the continued use of Positive Education skills, and trialling them, will be important.

2.2 Staff Engagement and Well-Being

Most research to date has focused on understanding Positive Education at the level of students, but it is also imperative to explore organisational issues, including staff engagement and well-being. As Lendrum et al. (2013) observe, 'The failure to develop staff understanding and skills may present one of the biggest barriers to the successful implementation of school-based [mental health] prevention and promotion programs'. A qualitative investigation into the facilitating factors and barriers of engagement conducted with GGS staff suggests that staff can become highly engaged with Positive Education, actively applying the concepts and skills across a wide range of personal and professional settings (Clancey 2014). Participants reported not just engaging with Positive Education in a philosophical sense, but many also actively changed behaviours. Staff reported feeling most engaged when they felt competent, were supported by strong relationships, and had a degree of autonomy in their role. Engagement was also related to the extent that staff had the time to learn and practice new strategies, perceived line managers and leaders to be acting congruently with Positive Education values, and felt they had access to opportunities for professional learning and advancement. Consistent with these findings, Williams et al. (2015) found in their analysis of data from GGS staff that enhancing employee happiness is best supported through multiple intervention targets that focus on both enhancing individual employee well-being and changing organisational culture.

2.3 Engaging Parents in Positive Education

Another important stakeholder group within schools is parents, who play a vital role in school communities. A recent study at GGS provided preliminary insight into the impact of a 3 day intensive Positive Education programme for parents, which

focused on teaching positive psychology strategies such as gratitude and use of character strengths to the parent population (Dubroja 2014). A mixed methodology non-randomised control group design was used to assess pre- to post-intervention change in 24 intervention participants and 16 waitlist control participants. Results revealed significant increases in parental well-being and parent-school connection among the intervention participants, as compared to controls. Qualitative findings indicated that parents also perceived a positive impact on their communication with their child. Overall, these pilot findings provide promising preliminary evidence for the benefits of strategically engaging parents in Positive Education, as well as indicating areas for further programme development, such as the potential to more explicitly address the application of positive psychology in the family setting.

3 Key Practice Issues

The effective translation of science into practice is complex work. The fields of positive psychology, psychology at large and education will continue to grow and change, and Positive Education needs to be flexible enough to evolve with them or it risks becoming a short-lived fad within education's many competing priorities. Maintaining healthy and respectful relationships between research, theory and practice across multiple disciplines will be essential to achieving this. Research efforts need to focus not only on which Positive Education practices 'work', but also to encompass how to best implement evidence-based programmes in particular settings in order to maintain the benefits demonstrated in tightly controlled studies (Elias et al. 2003). At the individual level, it is necessary to explore the potential impacts that exposure to positive psychology interventions may have on a young person's development and how best to maintain positive behaviour change.

Informed by the SEL and implementation science literature, as well as practice wisdom, the following section outlines some of the key practice issues associated with the implementation process of Positive Education. These issues are framed by systems thinking which emphasise typical and atypical development, process-level explanations of human behaviour, bidirectional influences between individuals and their contexts, and mechanisms underlying change and stability (Granic and Patterson 2006). In discussing the issues schools face as they move between the phases of committing to change, taking first steps, to sustaining Positive Education, there are no easy solutions but suggestions are provided for relevant factors that can be considered.

3.1 Committing to Change

Positive Education is a whole-school approach, which encourages change across all members of the school community. A key concern for schools beginning to

implement Positive Education is gaining adequate buy-in from their students, staff and wider community to ensure effective change takes place. Individuals leading change in schools must be ready to confront many questions ranging from the fundamental 'Why would we put effort and resources into Positive Education?', to the specific 'How is this relevant to what I do every day in the classroom?' Questions and open discussion are part of the change process and help to invite participation from school staff (Copland 2003). To facilitate this, change-makers require knowledge and expertise to help inspire, motivate, and set the direction of where the school is going. As described by Hallinger and Heck (2002), vision is an avenue of influence when leading change in schools, reflecting personal and collective values and can be a catalyst for transformational change when shared. In order to communicate a vision, change-makers must have an adequate understanding of the key principles of Positive Education and research supporting its application, as well as skills in adapting and communicating these ideas to suit their school setting.

Another key consideration in driving commitment to change is the role of leadership. Practice wisdom and organisational literature emphasise the necessity of applying both top-down and bottom-up approaches to facilitating change (Harris 2004), with leaders strategically balancing these approaches over time (Hopkins 2011). Each school's circumstances are different, but from the very beginning it is important to establish clarity around leadership commitment and set up systems of distributed leadership and capacity building, so that the school community receives consistent messages and works together as a professional learning community (Stoll et al. 2006). When considering how to roll out Positive Education, it is important for change-makers and leaders to know when the Principal's explicit endorsement of Positive Education is needed to drive action, and conversely when school leaders should step away to encourage staff to innovate and lead their own Positive Education initiatives. For example, at GGS, leadership has continued to set expectations around staff participating in professional development and embedding Positive Education through the implicit curriculum, yet encourage staff to be creative and collaborative in how they go about doing this by celebrating and sharing best practices in staff meetings, conferences, and school communications. Teacher's sense of ownership over how they teach Positive Education has meant that new areas and topics are continually being explored and developed, and the leadership's setting of expectations has had a strong impact on cultural norms with a clear message about the priority given to Positive Education.

Evaluating the extent of leadership's understanding and commitment is particularly relevant to Positive Education and SEL because both fields push the traditional boundaries of education. Programmes aimed at building 'life skills' in schools are frequently seen as short-term, reactionary and desirable rather than essential to the core business of schools (Adelman and Taylor 1999; Bond et al. 2001). Schools need to grapple with how Positive Education is positioned in relation to conventional measures of performance such as academic test scores. When leaders understand and communicate their rationale for adopting Positive Education contextualised within their own school values, it is easier for community

members to see how it relates to them and their place in the school. Messages become stronger and more powerful if leadership and change-makers can contextualise and integrate Positive Education with the school's other areas of strategic growth and provide adequate resources to support implementation.

3.2 First Steps in Implementing Positive Education

In making effective decisions about the best way to implement Positive Education, schools require good-quality information, which comes in a variety of different forms. Where possible, baseline measurement of student, staff, and parent well-being provides valuable information into the school's strengths and needs. The development of assessment tools is still an emerging area, however, and schools need to be critical consumers in weighing up the purpose and cost of assessment in relation to local needs and resources, as well as the rigour of the measures on the market. A number of tools are now available that makes well-being assessment relatively simple, and stronger tools also show reasonable psychometric properties with ongoing efforts to establish validity and reliability. Assessment should be viewed as an ongoing tool for quality improvement.

Other schools provide an important source of information and support. Beginning schools might connect with schools further down the path within their local networks and establish mentoring relationships. Such relationships have the potential to help schools predict and overcome obstacles, as well as share knowledge and resources. In recent years, networks of Positive Education schools have increasingly formalised into organisations like the International Positive Education Network (IPEN) and Positive Education Schools Association (PESA) in Australia. A key aim of these organisations is helping schools to connect with one another through conferences and online platforms. Whilst great progress has been made in this area, there is still much work to be done in bringing together Positive Education schools in local clusters, and establishing consistent quality standards and practices of Positive Education schools at an international level.

Schools will vary on how ready they are to take on certain elements of Positive Education. In making these decisions, schools need to think through how the timing and process of implementation will be received so they can best manage issues likely to arise. Continuing to develop a critical mass to drive Positive Education is needed at all stages of implementation. This process involves change-makers understanding how individual's changing states are aligned with the organisation's changing state (Moran and Brightman 2000). In driving critical mass, it is important for change-makers to keep a healthy balance of focus and support for those people who are passionate and enthusiastic about Positive Education, whilst being open to and transparent with those expressing resistance to Positive Education. A common concern expressed when Geelong Grammar School started Positive Education, and for many schools beginning to implement Positive Education, is how proposed changes will mean increased workload and responsibilities for educators who are

already busy. It is important to give space and consideration to these practical concerns, and where possible aim for changes which complement existing practices and take account of time as a valuable resource. All introductions of new practices or requirements must be considered in light of what other demands on workload will be reduced or taken away.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) can be another way to open up this dialogue between those people who are passionate about Positive Education and those who have reservations. The focus of AI is on searching for the best in people, their organisations, and the relevant world around them, in order to inform system change (Cooperrider and Whitney 2001). Rather than traditional approaches of organisational development which involve assessing problems and putting in place interventions, AI involves asking all members of the community to discuss a series of questions about what is working well within their school and what they would like to see happen for their school. As described by Waters and White (2015), when applied to Positive Education, AI can be a powerful way to involve all members of a school community, as well as unite and energise people of different roles towards a shared purpose.

3.3 *Sustaining Change*

There are a number of factors which influence the sustainability of Positive Education ranging across resourcing concerns, the clarity and tracking of outcomes, appropriate planning and implementation, the wax and wane of human motivation and sociopolitical factors driving competing education initiatives. Whilst the applied framework of *learn, live, teach and embed* can be very useful in assessing the practices and policies of Positive Education, the realities and constraints of practice can mean that these processes do not occur in a linear way. This highlights a key point about the nature of change in organisations: change across complex systems is often nonlinear, and as a result cannot be reduced to stepwise implementation planning, but instead requires continual adaptation to changing environmental conditions through reference to a clear and actionable vision for the future (Styhre 2002). If schools apply rigid stepwise implementation approaches to Positive Education, they run the risk of missing key opportunities for growth and not responding in an adaptive way to changes in their environment. Indeed, many whole-school change efforts are not sustained, and those that are often require years to fully embed (Elias et al. 2003).

Whilst schools require flexibility to sustain Positive Education, they also require structured planning to ensure long-term viability. As described by Sugai and Horner (2006) in reference to the sustainability of Positive Behaviour Support whole-school initiatives, it is important for schools to be aware of the 'train-and-hope' approach to organisational change. The train-and-hope approach is when staff receive in-house training from an external expert with the expectation that they will then apply their learning to their teaching practice. This approach is destined to fail

because there is less impetus to establish system supports such as resources, organisational structures and policies which are required for sustained practice over time (Sugai and Horner 2006).

Planning for how Positive Education training is used and embedded across the school is a vital consideration. For example, whole-staff training in well-being is likely to have limited impact if not complemented by specific structures like roles, resources, working groups, curriculum development, and policy development which relates directly to the training. Of these activities, decisions about human resources can be highly influential in the success or failure of Positive Education initiatives. Time needs to be taken to ensure people with the right set of skills are assigned to roles. When considering the diversity of skills and expertise required to drive Positive Education, there is great value in establishing multi-disciplinary teams who include teachers, psychologists, and student support staff. The right people for the right role also require time to fit this into already demanding schedules and workloads; in adding something to their role, something needs to be removed.

The process of sustaining Positive Education is iterative and requires continuous feedback from the whole-school community and the broader community at large. As GGS has progressed with Positive Education, the school has placed an increasing emphasis on formal and informal forms of feedback, and creating space for constructive criticism. Informal forms of feedback include: open and honest conversations with people who fulfil different roles within the organisation (e.g. students, teachers, cleaning staff, leadership, parents), evaluating participation levels at professional learning training over time, noting patterns of staff retention and discussions with other schools about what has worked or not worked. Formal forms of feedback include: small-scale local evaluations of new projects and/or initiatives the school is implementing, surveys to GGS staff as well as external teachers about their attitudes to training, current needs and evaluation of training offered, and university partnerships to complete independent research and evaluation projects. Even with this extent of feedback, more work and expertise is needed to ensure community members have a voice and feel heard, and that feedback is translated to meaningful change.

Another challenge for Positive Education is associated with sustaining motivation beyond the new and exciting ‘honeymoon’ of change. This problem may be compounded by the short-term focus of many of the interventions that characterise positive psychology, and consequently Positive Education. Many positive psychology Interventions (PPIs) have been found to be effective in increasing measures of reported well-being in the short term, yet less is known about their long-term lasting effects (Cohn and Fredrickson 2010). As we begin to understand the long-term impact of interventions, practitioners will be able to make more informed decisions about the frequency and follow-up required for specific interventions. It is likely that PPIs will have differential effects on people due to factors like individual differences, development, and context. As argued by Bolier et al. (2013) in their review of PPIs, positive effects are likely to be increased from greater personalisation to individuals’ needs.

4 Future Directions

As a relatively new field, Positive Education continues to grow and evolve, and there are many challenges that require work ahead. Just a few of these are discussed below, which are in addition to the key research and practice issues raised above. These represent both challenges as well as opportunities to enhance current practice in a number of interesting new directions.

4.1 Investigating Positive Education as a Whole-School Approach

A challenge in terms of evaluating Positive Education is capturing the impact of the programme as a whole-school approach. As a discreet element, the explicit curriculum lends itself to easier evaluation, but this is only one programme component. Indeed, the combination of explicit and implicit curriculum, pedagogical approach, staff training, and changes to organisational policies and procedures, may be more important than any one component in isolation. Some studies are beginning to appear (Shoshani and Steinmetz 2013) that have randomised implementation of Positive Education across schools, and these provide the strongest evidence to date of the impact of Positive Education as a whole-school approach. Consistent with the messages of SEL researchers, much research is still needed in future to understand what specific ingredients (or combination of programme factors) are driving positive change. Measuring and exploring implementation issues will be critical in these evaluation efforts, such as issues of adherence to the programme, dosage, quality of programme delivery, and buy-in and engagement at both the student and staff level (Lendrum and Humphrey 2012).

4.2 Eudaimonic Well-Being

There is increasing interest in how moral development ties into pathways of both positive development and mental health problems, and how Positive Education programmes can more explicitly target this aspect of well-being. Over 2000 years ago, Plato and Aristotle polarised thinking on well-being into two diametrically opposed philosophical positions. The first, advocated by Plato, argued that 'the good life' was a happy or pleasurable life (hedonia). The second, advocated by Aristotle, argued that 'the good life' was a moral life—structured by virtues of kindness, trust, loyalty, honesty and so forth (eudaimonia). Eudaimonic approaches to well-being consider values of caring for self, others and the wider world, expressed in such acts as volunteering, community activities, and civic engagement.

There is growing interest in how eudaimonic aspects of well-being can be further targeted within Positive Education programmes. The Aristotelian position is that moral or caring values are not learned intellectually or by instruction, but through personal experience of engaging in caring actions. For example, in a longitudinal study by Hallam et al. (2014), caring action in later adolescence was found to be associated with enhanced emotional competence in early adulthood. This research suggests that there may be an opportunity to promote students' resilience and healthy behaviours through their participation in caring action that promotes the common good of the wider community. How such experiences can be integrated within Positive Education programmes is currently under investigation at GGS, where students are engaging in personally chosen caring actions that contribute to the well-being of the community.

4.3 Application Across School Settings

Positive Education has been taken up disproportionately by higher resourced schools, an issue that has also been discussed in relation to SEL (Hoffman 2009). Exploring the applicability of Positive Education across school settings, including the full range of socio-economic diversity, is therefore an important next step. There are also interesting questions to be explored in the relevance of Positive Education for disadvantaged students and schools specifically. Critics of positive psychology have been concerned that it marginalises the voices of disenfranchised groups (Rao and Donaldson in press), and that there has been little attention in positive psychology to discussion of social justice (Bacigalupe 2001). Further consideration needs to be given to the applicability of Positive Education within disadvantaged schools, which will be informed by greater understanding of what the 'ingredients' are that these programmes need to be effective and the balance between programme fidelity with the need to tailor to individual school settings. Some work is already underway around the transferability of the GGS explicit curriculum programme component to lower resourced schools (see Norrish and O'Connor 2015). Social emotional skills have been suggested as a key individual-level factor differentiating those children from disadvantaged school environments who go on to experience educational success (Reyes et al. 2013), and hence reflects an important opportunity to address educational inequities. Strengths-based approaches to addressing social issues could also help to shift the narrative towards harnessing disadvantaged students' strengths and resilience, rather than remediating deficits (Rao and Donaldson in press).

5 Conclusions

The application of positive psychology ideas within the school setting continues to gather increasing interest at an international level. Positive Education seeks to take the knowledge gained through positive psychology and combine this with expertise on school culture, learning, and pedagogy from the educational field. The GGS experience of implementing Positive Education as a whole-school approach suggests that implementation issues are critical considerations to the success of such initiatives, and programmes will need to continue to evolve flexibly and develop over time.

Acknowledgements We wish to thank all staff, visitors, and academics who have generously contributed their time and expertise to the development of Positive Education at Geelong Grammar School. All named authors are employees of Geelong Grammar School, Victoria, Australia.

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SEL Approaches that Have Worked: A Case Study of the Role of Formative Evaluation

Erica Frydenberg and Denis Muller

Abstract Over three years, Catholic Education Melbourne introduced an Initiative to alter the way social and emotional learning (SEL) was incorporated into Melbourne's Catholic systemic schools. The Initiative was subjected to a process of formative evaluation by the authors of this chapter. The process of formative evaluation influenced the development of the Initiative over the three years and provides a case study in how it can be used to yield contemporaneous data on the implementation of a new policy in a way that allows the implementation to be continually improved. This chapter recounts how formative evaluation was carried out and its effects on the implementation of the SEL Initiative. Additionally, it highlights key elements of successful SEL implementation.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Implementation · Whole-school approach · Formative evaluation

1 Introduction

Between 2010 and 2012, Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM), which administers Catholic systemic school education in Melbourne, embarked on a new approach to teaching social and emotional learning (SEL) in its schools. The central tenet of this was that SEL could be successfully achieved by a whole-of-curriculum approach rather than through self-contained, stand-alone programmes. This represented a significant departure from established practice, and it was recognised by CEM that a

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E. Frydenberg, A.J. Martin and R.J. Collie (eds.), *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3394-0_20

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substantial programme of induction and training would be needed if the new approach were to be successfully adopted by the schools.

This chapter demonstrates how formative evaluation was used to achieve a number of objectives with respect to implementing SEL in the schools. First, it allowed adjustments to be made to the induction and training programme in response to the experiences of the schools participating in each iteration of the Initiative. Second, it provided a means by which participating schools could give frank and comprehensive feedback, free of organisational and hierarchical constraints. Third, it allowed CEM executive staff responsible for the roll-out to find out in some detail how the implementation was proceeding, and to identify barriers and enablers to progress. Fourth, it introduced an element of accountability for all parties concerned: for the schools in how they were performing in adopting the new approach, for the mentor in how effective her induction and training were, and for CEM staff in the effectiveness of their approach. The purpose of this chapter is to set out the lessons from this case and provide the basis for reflecting on how formative evaluation can be used effectively as a constructive partner in achieving change in policies and programmes concerning SEL. Comparisons are also made between this programme and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme in the UK to explore what were the barriers and enablers of the SEL implementation.

2 Review of the Literature

2.1 *SEL: Its Effects and Assessment*

In a large international meta-analysis of SEL interventions across 213 sites ranging from kindergartens to secondary schools, SEL was defined as the process of acquiring the skills to recognise and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively (Elias et al. 1997).

Effects of SEL Durlak and Weissberg's (2011) study covered 270,034 students. They found as a result of the social and emotional interventions across those 213 sites that compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement (p. 405). They went on to argue from this evidence that social and emotional development is an essential part of students' education. They also noted that SEL programme designers typically are interested in promoting the *integration* (our emphasis) of emotion, cognition, communication, and behaviour (Crick and Dodge 1994; Lemerise and Arsenio 2000).

Durlak and Weissberg's (2011) findings add to the growing empirical evidence regarding the positive impact of SEL programmes. This evidence includes the existence of compelling links between the acquisition of SEL competencies and improved school attitudes and performance (Zins et al. 2004). For example, students who are more self-aware and confident about their learning capacities try harder and persist in the face of challenges (Aronson 2002). Why is there such an apparently strong connection between social and emotional competence and educational success?

Teaching and learning in schools have strong social, emotional, and academic components (Zins et al. 2004). It has been clearly demonstrated that collaboration is the basis for children's learning: collaboration with teachers, peers, and families. They do not learn alone. Successful collaboration depends on good relationships. Good relationships require emotional and social competence. Therefore, social and emotional competence facilitates the learning process; conversely, emotional and social incompetence can impede it (Elias et al. 1997). Other studies to document the connections between social and emotional variables and academic performance include correlational and longitudinal research (e.g. Caprara et al. 2000; Wang et al. 1997). By their nature, these studies suggest that the connections are deep-seated and long-lasting.

Assessment of SEL Denham (2015) addressed the issue of how SEL might be assessed. She developed recommendations concerning appropriate educational assessments of the various SEL competencies, keeping in mind the different developmental tasks of each age and the nature of each SEL competency. She listed three elements as necessary to SEL assessment: standards for children's SEL progress; evidence-based curricula and instruction; and universal and targeting monitoring (formative, interim, and summative) of progress. She set out a map showing her conception of how these three elements fitted together: developmental tasks as the substrate on which SEL competencies are developed; standards that correspond to these competencies and form the basis for assessment; a reiterative function in which standards and assessment influence repeatedly subsequent instruction; and potential revision of standards. All these led to positive change in SEL skills.

It is widely acknowledged that there are benefits to be gained by promoting SEL in an educational context. In recent years, several key documents have highlighted the economic benefits that flow from improved academic performance and psychological adjustment throughout the schooling experience (Belfield et al. 2015; OECD 2015). Additionally, it is widely recognised that there are multiple approaches to the implementation of SEL. Instructional approaches range from free-standing lessons, guidance to administrators on how to provide leadership relating to SEL, a focus on general teaching practice, and the integration of SEL into the curriculum (Dusenbury et al. 2015). The project described here combined two of these approaches, namely engagement of the leadership and the focus on teaching practice.

Darling-Hammond (2003) identified several key big ideas in education. These included, development and learning, cognitive factors, culture and learning, learning in a social context, motivation, and emotions and learning.

In the light of this thinking, the creation of an emotionally safe classroom and the development of emotionally intelligent learners have been identified as key objectives in education. As a result, SEL has become a central feature of educational practice in many places. The Smarter Schools National Partnership (SSNP) SEL Initiative introduced by the CEM over 2010–2012 was grounded in this thinking. It was supported by a large body of research which demonstrates the importance of SEL for:

- the development of the whole child;
- successful academic learning; and
- the creation of a productive learning environment.

The findings from the 2010–2012 evaluation conducted for the CEM are located firmly within this literature, and connections are made between the findings from the CEM evaluation and international research.

3 The SSNP SEL Project

In 2009, as part of the Australian Government's SSNP reform agenda, 35 low SES Catholic schools were identified across the Archdiocese of Melbourne to participate in a range of Initiatives to enhance learning outcomes for young people. One of these was the SSNP SEL Initiative. The Initiative, developed by Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM), embodied the elements of SEL as defined by Durlak and Weissberg (2011) in the focus on acquiring goals, managing emotions, making responsible decisions, and having effective relationships.

Some groundwork had been laid by CEM two years earlier, when it distributed to all its schools a resource in the form of a ring-bound folder, the aim of which was to introduce them to the concept of embedding SEL across the curriculum (Catholic Education Office 2007). As it was explained to the researchers by one of the CEM student well-being teams, the most important part of the resource was that which concerned implementation. This folder contained guidelines for introducing a whole-school approach to SEL. It provided an overview of social and emotional learning and how SEL was linked to whole-school improvement, placed a strong emphasis on the role of school leadership in achieving this, provided audit tools to help schools identify what they were doing in this area and with what success, and provided resources to help schools see how a whole-school approach might be implemented.

The importance these guidelines placed on school leadership was exemplified by a self-reflection checklist against which school leaders were encouraged to assess themselves. This checklist was divided into two broad categories of SEL

competences, self-awareness, and self-management. Under these broad headings were several qualities such as emotional self-awareness, self-confidence, self-control, and adaptability. School leaders could tick “almost always”, “sometimes”, or “rarely” and then reflect on their own performance.

However, as CEM knew, just sending out a ring-bound folder does not produce change, so in order to give impetus to this endeavour, CEM committed to a three-year project to assist 35 low SES schools to introduce a whole-of-school approach to SEL. In some schools, a significant number of students were from refugee backgrounds whilst in others students lived in circumstances of social and emotional deprivation.

During 2010–2012, the CEM facilitated the opportunity for these school communities to work with a university mentor to develop and implement ways to embed SEL into the overall learning culture. Through an intensive professional learning and mentoring model, the SSNP SEL Initiative provided an opportunity for the CEM to explore and evaluate effective whole-school approaches to SEL. It was anticipated that the learnings from this Initiative would be used to inform future system-wide practice to enhance schools’ capacities to provide safe, contemporary, and effective learning environments for all students.

The philosophy underpinning this Initiative is that prevention is better than cure, and that children do better academically and have better life chances if they are socially and emotionally competent. The CEM’s approach to this was substantially influenced by the Collaborative on Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), which was visited in Chicago by a senior CEM well-being officer in 2005. Emblematic of the preventative focus is that the CEM uses the term “well-being” in preference to “welfare”, because it is seen as incorporating the idea of developing and monitoring social and emotional capacity in students rather than looking after them after they have shown signs of social or emotional need. This shift in emphasis occurred in 2006 and was accompanied by policies to make social and emotional development a whole-school responsibility instead of having it confined to a “welfare” teacher or department. Indeed, the student well-being leaders were trained to see their role as leaders in “system-wide change” (see Freeman and Strong 2016, this volume).

A vital part of achieving this shift was to engage the leadership group in each school to ensure they understood the importance of SEL to the holistic development of the child, including academic development. In many schools, this required a change in mindset from seeing SEL as separate from academic learning to one where it was seen as being integral to it. Indeed, the SEL Initiative had as its main focus the broadening of school education to include the health and well-being of students as part of a school’s core business. The Initiative was designed to educate school leadership teams in this idea, to help them see how to make health and well-being part of their core business by integration into the whole-school curriculum, and to assist them in implementing that change. Health and well-being were no longer to be placed in a silo and attended to in dedicated slots on the timetable, such as religious instruction. Whilst there was a strong culture of pastoral

care in the schools, not all schools could readily see that the proposed integrated approach would make any real difference to what they were already doing.

Each year between 2010 and 2012, cohorts of nine to thirteen schools engaged in the SSNP SEL Initiative. The objective was to build the capacity of school leaders and staff to develop an integrated and sustainable whole-school approach to SEL, based on the SEL Guidelines published by the CEM. As part of the broader SSNP agenda, schools in the first (2010) cohort of nine were appointed to take part. Following successful implementation of the Initiative in that cohort, the word went out from those nine schools that this was genuinely worthwhile, not just from a student's point of view but from that of teachers, leadership groups, and school communities as a whole. Consequently, when the second cohort of schools were identified and invited for 2011, the take-up was far more prompt, and the same was true for the third cohort in 2012.

A SEL leadership team from each school participated in a series of workshops conducted by the university mentor, in which schools identified ways to embed SEL into all aspects of school life. A significant development of the Initiative was the introduction of a session whereby each core team developed a set of strategies in order to support staff in the process of developing a whole-school approach to SEL. It was considered that a practical way of achieving this integration was to adopt the key competencies of SEL as identified in the literature (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making; CASEL 2013), and find ways in which students could develop these competencies whilst simultaneously engaging in academic learning.

Thus, to take a simple example, when Prep-grade children were being taught literacy, the teacher would read a fairy tale such as Hansel and Gretel and invite the class to talk about the qualities of adaptability and resilience shown by the main characters. Or when secondary students were studying biology, the teacher would invite discussion about the interdependence of life forms and draw out the implications for human social life. These examples were revealed during the research and illustrate how the integration of health and well-being with academic content was achieved. This required a considerable amount of creative energy on the part of the teaching staff, and in the schools where it was best done, considerable resources went into helping them through curriculum workshops and the sharing of ideas. Only where the principal and the curriculum leaders showed real commitment, however were the teaching staff given this assistance. Where this commitment was present, the integration occurred across the school; where it was absent, the teachers who believed in the integration ideal adopted it and implemented it through their own creative skill, and those who did not believe in the ideal or found it too hard went on as before. Thus, school leadership was the decisive factor in whether the overarching objective of the SEL Initiative was achieved. More information about this Initiative can be obtained at www.cem.edu.au.

In December 2010, the authors were commissioned by the CEM to evaluate the introduction of the Initiative, reporting on each year's cohort so that any lessons learned could be applied in subsequent cohorts, and overall learnings used to guide CEM future planning and directions. Ultimately, of the 35 schools originally

identified for inclusion in the Initiative, 32 started. Of these, two discontinued their involvement in the Initiative before they had completed the professional development, leaving 30 schools involved over the three cohorts. All 30 were visited for the purposes of conducting the evaluation, and a report on each cohort was provided to the CEM.

In addition to the cohort reports, a summative report was written for the CEM reflecting on the overall process by which the SEL Initiative was introduced, and proposed recommendations for how a focus on SEL might be sustained in the existing schools and introduced to other schools in the Melbourne Archdiocese. The reflections and recommendations were located in the context of contemporary academic research literature on SEL in schools. Good practice in whole-school approaches to SEL was identified, and the role of an education system in the successful implementation of Initiatives such as this was discussed.

4 Method for Evaluating the SEL Initiative

The method adopted for the study reported here was formative evaluation. The rationale for, and usefulness of, formative evaluation is described by O'Dwyer (2008) and is based on a recognition that ongoing evaluation is important to the process of change, an idea that by then had attained considerable traction. It is a method particularly suited to assessing and assisting with the processes of change in curriculum, leadership, and organisational culture. All these elements were present in the introduction of the SEL Initiative by the CEM. The teaching of SEL competencies was to be embedded in all parts of the curriculum, rather than consigned to religious instruction or other pastorally oriented subjects. This required teachers to think anew about how to teach their subjects. In order for this to be taken seriously by teachers, the school leadership needed to be persuaded of the idea's merits, namely that the social and emotional well-being of students was an integral part of the school's business of teaching and learning.

In each of the 3 years of the Initiative, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researchers with the teams from each of the schools that had participated that year in the training, as well as with a sample of teachers from each school who had not attended the training. Typically the SEL teams from each school consisted of the principal, the deputy principal, the well-being coordinator, and sometimes the curriculum coordinator. An in-depth semi-structured interview was also conducted with the university mentor. From these interviews, a report was written each year on what had worked and what had not worked in the training, what the teams had found to be the enablers and barriers to introducing SEL into their schools. Based on these reports, adjustments were made each year to the training programme. The adjustments did not alter the content of the training, but were focused largely on better equipping the teams to manage the process of developing interventions, sharing ideas during the training sessions, effective ways

in which to introduce the Initiative to the staff who had not attended the training and developing opportunities for review and feedback.

The reports also provided the CEM staff responsible for implementing the Initiative with feedback on the issues confronting schools. This enabled them to better understand what was really happening with the implementation of the Initiative in the schools. This aspect of the research work was valuable because schools felt empowered to tell the researchers things that some were reluctant to tell their superiors. Care was taken to mask the identities of the interviewees for this reason. Some principals and school leadership teams were more robust in this respect than others. Some were more than happy to tell the CEM exactly what was working and what was not, but others were not so robust. The benefit of having the researchers report without identifying the schools or the personnel provided everyone with the opportunity to have their experiences conveyed to the Central Leadership anonymously. This iterative process revealed significant shifts over the three years in the capabilities of the schools to implement SEL. This in itself was useful because it showed whether the adjustments made each year were working or not. In some schools where the curriculum coordinator was not on board, it was generally more difficult to engage the teaching staff in the task of changing their subject content to accommodate SEL concepts and to present the content in ways that assisted students to develop SEL competencies.

Formative evaluation is a useful tool for assisting with change in precisely these circumstances. O'Dwyer (2008) observes from case study data that it is evident that curriculum renewal is not carried out solely on the basis of well-articulated educational philosophy, but is also influenced by "unforeseen conjunctures" (p. 94). By these, he seems to mean points where the process of change intersects with factors that are not educational in nature, but have to do with legal and financial considerations, communications challenges, and institutional history. O'Dwyer (2008) argues that there is a clear expectation that the formative evaluation research into curriculum development will entail connections and have implications which mirror everyday realities of organisational life. From his own case study, based on a renewal project at Bilkent University in Turkey, he concludes that formative evaluation had a definite and significant part to play in improving curriculum outcomes as one among many independent variables contributing to improved results. Other factors were clarity of mission, the choice of people, leadership skills, and structures that were in place. The formative evaluation approach was well suited to the three-year implementation of the SSNP SEL Initiative and led to concrete improvements in that implementation.

5 Findings from the CEM SEL Initiative and Their Implications for Practitioners

5.1 Findings of Note

The 2010–2012 CEM SSNP SEL evaluation focused on implementation and the emerging effects of the Initiative as perceived by the schools. These effects were described as positive for individual students, the learning environment, and the culture within the school. Generally speaking, individual students were said to be exhibiting greater appreciation of the effects of their behaviour on other people, a greater capacity to manage their emotional responses, and a greater capacity to resolve social issues as they arose. The learning environment was commonly described as calmer and more constructive, and the existing culture of the school—usually described in terms such as “open” and “caring”—was said to have been enhanced. There also was some evidence that the staff as well as the students were paying more attention to the development of positive relationships. These effects on students, the learning environment, the culture of the school, and the staff were the result of the interaction of three factors:

1. Inspiration—recognition of the intrinsic value of SEL coupled with engaging and expert professional learning
2. Resources—provision of time and money to allow people to be exposed to the necessary learning and be supported in implementation
3. Accountability—the existence of a framework and sequence of requirements to demonstrate what actions had been taken and what outcomes had been achieved

In the broad, these findings replicated the contours of the findings of the international studies (e.g. Belfield et al. 2015; Caprara et al. 2000; OECD 2015).

Over the three years, the formative nature of the evaluation revealed significant shifts in the way schools looked at the Initiative, in their capacity to integrate SEL on a whole-school basis, and in their levels of confidence in being able to sustain it. The first cohort of schools (2010) mostly saw it as a tool for managing student behaviour. In these schools, integrating SEL into the curriculum was at a very early stage. They also expressed the need for continuing external support to sustain it. The schools in the second cohort (2011) mostly saw it in much broader terms as a way of educating the whole child. Schools in this cohort were considerably further on in their capacity to integrate SEL into the curriculum. However, they too expressed lack of confidence in their ability to sustain the effort without injections of inspiration and energy from outside. The schools in the third cohort (2012) had a much fuller appreciation than did either of the earlier two cohorts of the connections between SEL and all-round student outcomes. They demonstrated a noticeably more developed capacity to integrate SEL into the broader curriculum. They were also more confident of their capacity to sustain a whole-school approach to SEL, and many felt able to offer assistance to other schools if needed.

5.2 Challenges and Enablers that Affect SEL Implementation

The case study revealed the existence of challenges and enablers to implementation that had much in common with the introduction of the UK’s Initiative called Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). These are set out in full in Fig. 1, but key ones include the cultural climate within the schools as well as within the larger system, quality of training and materials, school staff attitudes to change, incentives for involvement, and measures of accountability.

A comprehensive analysis of challenges and enablers that affect the implementation of SEL Initiatives was provided by Humphrey et al. (2010) in their national evaluation of SEAL. They first identified what they called barriers and

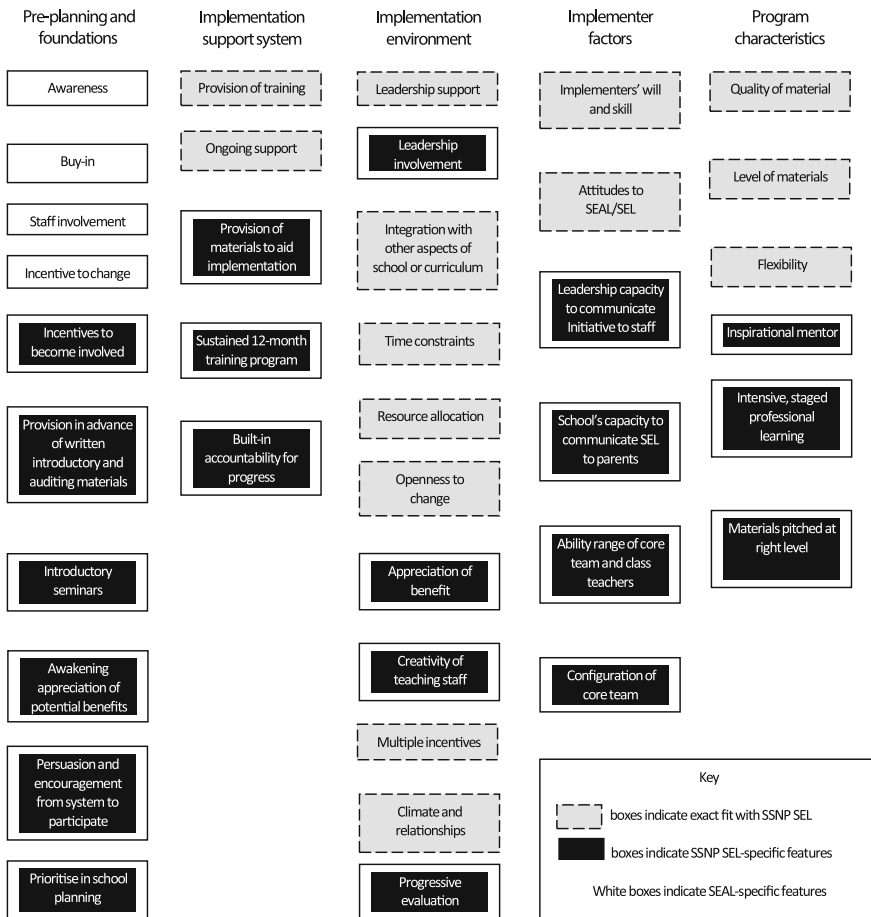


Fig. 1 Challenges and enablers: The fit between SEAL and SSNP SEL

facilitators in respect of the SEAL Initiative and then compared those with barriers and facilitators identified in the wider literature. This report reproduces these analyses and compares them with the challenges and enablers identified in the CEM SSNP SEL research.

Figure 1 shows the challenges and enablers that were found to have affected the implementation of the SEAL and SSNP SEL Initiatives. The boxes coloured grey indicate exact fits with findings from the SSNP SEL research. The boxes coloured black indicate factors that emerged from the SEL research, but did not appear among the SEAL findings. The white boxes indicate findings from the SEAL evaluation that did not appear among the SSNP SEL findings. It can be seen that there were significant similarities in the challenges and enablers as they affected the two Initiatives.

The most comprehensive differences were in the lead-up and preparation phase, which were quite different. The CEM worked through the school leaderships, using SEL Guidelines published by the CEM in 2009, the year before the first cohort of the SSNP SEL Initiative. These guidelines introduced the school leadership groups to the concept of SEL, gave them tools for auditing their existing practices, and provided them with a basic checklist against which they could monitor what they were doing. There was no capacity to directly mandate participation, but there was an incentive in that if schools were part of the SSNP Low SES School Communities Initiative, they would benefit from the funding that came with it. In contrast, SEAL was mandated outright by the UK Department for Education.

In the SSNP SEL Initiative, school leaders were exposed to the SEL concept through a series of introductory seminars, and it was through these that many obtained an appreciation of what the SSNP SEL Initiative might do for their school communities. Implementation support (column two in Fig. 1) consisted of three additional components in the SSNP SEL Initiative, as shown. By the time the third cohort of schools became involved, the element of accountability had been strengthened by requiring school teams to make presentations at the training workshops of the work they had done to that point. Schools generally liked this because it gave them a clear framework to reflect on their progress and a process to follow. It also added to the sharing among schools.

Implementation environment (column three) contained many similarities, but also some important differences. The main difference was that under SSNP SEL, the *involvement* of the principal—not just support from the principal—was essential for successful implementation. Another difference was that as staff came to appreciate the benefits, they began to buy into the Initiative. This phenomenon strengthened as the capacity of the core teams to communicate the Initiative to their staff improved. The third difference was that the success of implementation depended significantly on the creative talents of the teaching staff in seeing how the SEL competencies could be integrated into their teaching of the general curriculum. To help with this, during the intensive sessions core teams were provided with resources to take back to their schools. These took the form of appropriate literature, classroom teaching ideas, and resources for making connections with curriculum areas. Finally, the building in of progressive evaluation allowed for reflection and adjustment in

implementation, and in cohort three this acted as a form of accountability for progress.

Implementer factors (column four) also contained two important similarities, but also four important differences. Two of these differences concerned communication—first to the teaching staff and then to the parents. In the first cohort, core teams struggled to convey to teaching staff exactly how the SSNP SEL Initiative fitted into what they were already doing. Some took pains not to alarm the staff by saying it was new, in which case the staff asked why they were doing it at all. Eventually an effective message was formulated. This was that the SSNP SEL Initiative was a better way to do what they were already doing. Getting this message right took time, and schools' capacity to get it right improved noticeably over the three cohorts.

It also became apparent over the three cohorts that having the curriculum leader in the core team made implementing the Initiative much easier. Curriculum leaders are influential in schools, and having them obtain a full appreciation of the benefits of SEL breaks down the false dichotomy that commonly exists between the academic and well-being aspects of education.

It was evident throughout the study that teachers varied considerably in their capacity to imagine links between the teaching of SEL competencies and their teaching of the wider curriculum. Many teachers needed a lot of help to make these connections and to find resources for illustrating them in class.

The programme characteristics (column five) were more or less identical in the two Initiatives. However, the impact of the university mentor in the SEL Initiative was a significant positive factor that was absent in the SEAL project. Table 1, also adapted from Humphrey et al. (2010), summarises the challenges and enablers found across the literature generally, with the SEL Initiative added.

Some common threads can be drawn together from Table 1:

- Pre-planning and preparation require an awakening of interest augmented by some form of incentive to participate. These may take different forms, but both are necessary.
- Implementation support systems require good training, preferably with some form of ongoing support.
- Implementation environment requires leadership above all. It also requires integration with the curriculum, a culture which is open to change, a positive climate within the school, and sufficient time and resources to do the job.
- Implementer factors that are important are skill and knowledge but also a positive attitude.
- Programme characteristics that are important are good materials pitched at the right level, able to be adapted to a range of school settings, and delivered in intensive, staged professional learning sessions.

Table 1 Challenges and enablers of implementation identified in the SSNP SEL study and in the wider literature

Domain of analysis	Study	SEAL evaluation (2010)	Forman et al. (2009)	Durlak and DuPre (2008)	Greenberg et al. (2005)
Pre-planning and foundations	SSNP SEL Initiative (2010–2012) Incentives to become involved Provision in advance of introductory and auditing materials Introductory seminars Awakening appreciation of benefits Persuasion from system to participate Prioritise in school planning	Awareness Buy-in Staff involvement Incentive to change	Alignment with school philosophy Engaging the school in planning	Shared vision Formulation of tasks Openness to change	Awareness Commitment and engagement Incentive for change
Implementation support system	Provision of training Ongoing support Provision of materials Sustained 12-month training Built-in accountability	Provision of training Ongoing support	Provision of high-quality training	Training and technical assistance	Structure and content of training Timing of training
Implementation environment	Leadership support Leadership involvement Integration with curriculum Time constraints Resource allocation Openness to change Appreciation of benefit Creativity of staff Climate and relationships Built into school improvement process	Leadership support Multiple incentives Integration with curriculum Time constraints Resource allocation Openness to change Climate and relationships	Principal support Integration with curriculum Development of resources to sustain practice	Leadership Organisational capacity Integration of new programming Openness to change Positive work climate	Staff feel unsupported Insufficient time Resources Incentive for change School and classroom climate

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Domain of analysis	Study	SEAL evaluation (2010)	Forman et al. (2009)	Durlak and DuPre (2008)	Greenberg et al. (2005)
Implementer factors	SSNP SEL Initiative (2010–2012) Implementers' will and skill Attitudes to SEL Leadership capacity to communicate SEL to staff School's capacity to communicate SEL to parents Configuration of core teams Ability range of teachers to make links to curriculum	Implementers' will and skill Attitudes to SEAL	Teacher characteristics and behaviours Development of teacher support	Self-efficacy and skill proficiency Perceived need for innovation	Implementer skills and knowledge Implementer perceptions
Programme characteristics	Quality of materials Materials pitched at right level Flexibility Inspirational mentor Intensive, staged professional learning	Quality of materials Level of materials Flexibility	(No findings under this domain)	Characteristics of the innovation	Quality of materials

6 Implications for Practitioners

Findings from the research into the implementation of the SSNP SEL Initiative (2010–2012), supported by the findings from international studies summarised above, show that good practice in whole-school approaches to SEL consists of the following.

1. Committed and Involved Leadership from the Principal

It is not enough for the principal merely to support the introduction of SEL in a general way but subcontract leadership of it to someone else. The reason best practice requires the direct, committed involvement of the principal is that it:

- sends important signals about the priority attached to SEL amidst all the competing demands on schools;
- provides impetus and support for others involved in leading the endeavour;
- will ensure that SEL receives due attention in the decision-making councils of the school;
- will ensure SEL receives sufficient resourcing; and
- demonstrates to class teachers that there will be support for their work in this area and that they will be held to account for how well it is done.

The extent to which a principal can give direct committed involvement will vary with the size of the school and the leadership structure and resources available, but there must be some direct and committed involvement.

2. A Core Implementation Team that Includes Curriculum Leaders

There needs to be a core team of people, well trained in the concepts and implementation of SEL, to embed it in the school. Best practice requires the curriculum leader to be part of this team. Where this happens, the curriculum leader tends to develop a full appreciation of what SEL is and its importance as a foundation for academic success. This then influences the decisions made by this often powerful decision-maker in the school and has consequential effects on the conduct of curriculum leadership.

3. Embedding the Teaching of SEL Competencies Across the Curriculum

Where attention is paid to the inculcation of SEL competencies across the curriculum, students get optimal practice at them and come to see how they play out in everyday life. Confining the teaching to religious education or other values-oriented subjects limits these effects.

4. Guidance and Support for Teachers

Teachers vary in their creativity and in their capacity to see potential links between the SEL competencies and their curriculum content. Those who struggle to do so will not be able to successfully embed the teaching of the competencies in their teaching without help to make the links and find the necessary materials.

5. Reaching out to Families

If families understand the SEL competencies, their children's learning and practising of them will be augmented. The school is in an opportune position to actively reach out to families and share that knowledge with them. It requires proactive outreach, using personal contact. Simply writing articles about SEL in the newsletter will have little, if any, effect. Activities, communications strategies such as the use of a mascot or logo, and the ubiquitous presence of SEL posters and materials around the school will build on this outreach and also help keep SEL at the forefront of everyone's mind. Deliberate efforts to engage families in SEL activities build on the capacity of families to extend the learning of SEL at home. Thus, a partnership approach between school and home offers the promise of consistency and continuity in the development of SEL competencies in young people.

6. Refreshment and Renewal

Initiatives that are not embedded in school culture tend to have a shelf life. The novelty wears off, new priorities assert themselves, the keepers of the flame move on, the sharp edge of need gets blunted, and the insights underpinning the Initiative fade or become dated. Embedding anything into a culture takes time, and during that time best practice requires periodic re-invigoration by exposure to fresh presentations and thinking, an opportunity to explicitly celebrate what has been achieved, and a renewal of the sense of purpose. An injection of outside expertise is needed to give this refreshment credibility and interest. This general proposition applies as much to SEL as to anything else. A school culture that is safe, inclusive and welcoming, and receptive to the idea that social and emotional competence is essential to educational success.

7. Considerations about Systemic Practice

For the same reasons that leadership from the principal is essential at the school level, leadership at the system level is also essential if SEL is to be successfully implemented across a school system. The system must demonstrate by its own active, committed involvement that SEL is a high priority for which resources and support will be provided, and for which there will be accountability through the school improvement process. In practical terms, that means a ubiquitous presence for SEL in policy documents, specific budgetary provisions for SEL, allocation of personnel to provide support to schools, and specific inclusion of SEL in school improvement plans and other instruments of accountability.

Also, the involvement of curriculum leaders at the system level is essential if SEL is to stand up to the pressure that is exerted perennially by the need to improve scores on standardised testing of students. This involvement also helps bridge the false dichotomy that can easily develop between what is seen as the "hard stuff" of academic curriculum content and the "soft stuff" of SEL. These are mutually reinforcing.

A challenge at the system level is to strategically support the promotion of a whole-school approach to SEL across the system within a budget constraint whilst sustaining the necessary momentum and growth. As already indicated, schools need induction, training, implementation guidance and support, and periodic refreshment if SEL is to be successfully introduced and sustained. Their needs are especially acute at the induction, training, and implementation phases.

7 The Longer Term

In 2015, the researchers revisited the CEM to assess the impact and sustainability of the programme. In interviews with two members of the student well-being team at CEM, one of whom had been involved in the roll-out in 2010–2012 and one who had joined the well-being team since, the researchers were told that the lessons learned from the Initiative were now being applied to the introduction of a similar process in 60–70 more schools, all of them primary (children aged 5–12 years). The current process was a compressed version of the original, involving the schools in two days of workshops a year rather than four. This was referred to as “SEL in a nutshell” and was one of a number of Initiatives undertaken to build and sustain system-wide capacity to deliver SEL. The university mentor who delivered the original workshops remained on call as an adviser, but it had not been economically feasible to have her involved as intensively as she had been in the original roll-out.

Another Initiative, to enhance system-wide capacity by opening the minds of school staff to the possibilities of SEL, had been devised by the new member of the well-being team. This project was called “Wellbeing and Learning: It’s not Rocket Science” and was delivered in schools by the person who had devised it as part of her ordinary duties. Importantly, for the reasons already stated, the school teams who took part in “Rocket Science” included the curriculum coordinator. “Rocket Science” covered four SEL-related topics: creating a safe learning environment, how to find opportunities to embed the teaching of SEL competencies in the curriculum, parental engagement, and how to link the teaching of the SEL competencies with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, a set of educational standards laid down by the Victorian State Government.

Looking further ahead, the CEM has written a learning and teaching framework for the whole Melbourne archdiocese called “Horizons of Hope”, which includes an approach to learning design that informs how SEL will be further implemented. Within this document is the clear direction that good learning design should incorporate knowledge and understanding of the whole-school SEL implementation. As already mentioned, where curriculum leaders in schools became involved in the SEL Initiative, whole-school integration of SEL was noticeably more successful than otherwise. What was true for individual schools in this regard is also likely to be true for the system as a whole.

8 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter has been to demonstrate how the use of formative evaluation can constructively inform the implement of SEL Initiatives in schools. The implementation of the SSNP SEL Initiative in Melbourne was materially assisted by the formative evaluation process. The SSNP SEL case study also reinforced many of the findings from the SEAL programme in the UK, as well as revealing some differences. Among the most important differences was the role of school leadership. The SSNP SEL case study showed that mere support from the school leadership was not sufficient: direct involvement was required if change was to take root in schools. The direct participation of the curriculum coordinator as well as the principal was necessary.

Acknowledgements The authors acknowledge the support and assistance of the CEOM in permitting us to use the research for the purposes of writing this chapter and for reviewing it for accuracy.

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Developing Social Emotional Competence in the Early Years

Chelsea Cornell, Neisha Kiernan, Danielle Kaufman, Prishni Dobe, Erica Frydenberg and Janice Deans

Abstract During the early preschool years, children are learning more about social emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness. Nurturing these skills is important for positive developmental outcomes. In this chapter, we outline a body of research which identified age-appropriate use of children's coping language in the early learning setting, the development and validation of tools to measure the coping construct, and its relationship with indicators of children's anxiety, strengths, and difficulties. An early years coping based social emotional program, COPE-R, was developed to teach preschoolers about caring, open communication, politeness, and empathic sharing. The program, its implementation and evaluation using multiple approaches, is described. This exploratory research found that participation in the program assisted children's social emotional competencies. Collectively, the chapter highlights how social emotional skills can be assessed and taught in an early learning setting of three to five year old children.

Keywords Social emotional competence · Preschool · Coping · Anxiety · Mental health · Early intervention program · Early Years · Parents

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1 Introduction

Early years curricula documents, such as The Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009), The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (DEECD, 2009), and Te Whāriki (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996), all prioritise social and emotional skill development as it is recognised to be foundational to children's social well-being and empowerment. Recent research (Frydenberg, Deans, & Liang, 2014; Myers, 2000; Smith, 2013) indicates that social emotional learning (SEL) programs targeted at enhancing prosocial skills in preschool-aged children have the ability to promote positive developmental outcomes such as positive peer relationships, reduction in externalising problems such as physical aggression, and enhanced emotional regulation (Carreras et al., 2014; Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, & Davidson, 2015). Common foundational skills covered in SEL programs include understanding emotions in oneself and others, caring for oneself and others, and developing good listening and communication skills (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

This chapter outlines a body of research that identifies age-appropriate use of children's coping language in the early learning setting, the development and validation of tools to measure coping, and the relationship between coping and indicators of children's mental health including anxiety and other strengths and difficulties, such as emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer problems, and prosocial behaviour. Subsequently, a coping based social emotional skills building program for the early years, COPE-R, was developed to align with the Australian early years social emotional curriculum and to teach prosocial skills to preschoolers. The program, its implementation and evaluation using multiple approaches, is described in this chapter. Collectively, the chapter highlights how social emotional skills can be assessed and taught in an early learning setting of three- to five-year-old children.

2 The Importance of the Early Years

The preschool years are a crucial developmental period for children. It is a time of many transitions and numerous challenges, such as developing new relationships with peers and teachers, and learning to adapt to new environments. If not managed appropriately, these challenges and possible stressors can create difficulties for children during these early and later years (Margetts & Kienig, 2013). Research has found that children who have negative experiences at the beginning of their preschool years can develop more behavioural problems, including aggression and antisocial behaviour, than those who have not (Eisenberg et al., 2001).

However, when children develop a functional coping repertoire and a shared language of coping with others, more positive outcomes are likely to occur (Frydenberg et al., 2014). Coping refers to how an individual responds to stress and how they manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviour in an effort to decrease

sources of stress (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001). Children's use of effective coping strategies such as problem solving, positive reappraisal, forming good relationships, and managing conflict is important as they have been linked to positive behavioural and emotional outcomes (Compas et al., 2001; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Guthrie, 1997) and future schooling success (Fabian & Dunlop, 2007). These findings are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model of development which argues that the developmental process can be facilitated by engaging the child in the family and school environments, along with the wider community (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

3 Developing Social and Emotional Competence

Social and emotional competence is the capacity to get along with others and is crucial for supporting children's emotional, social, and cognitive development (Carman & Chapparo, 2012). It includes the ability to adapt and organise one's behaviours across different interpersonal demands and social contexts (Bierman, 2004), along with learning to understand oneself and others to develop a sense of self and personal and social capabilities (ACARA, 2012).

The most commonly cited definition for SEL comes from the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). It is described as:

The process by which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills to recognise and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions [and] handle inter-personal situations effectively (CASEL, 2013).

CASEL (2013) argue that the five core competencies of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making should be addressed in social and emotional educational practices. Research has demonstrated that nurturing social and emotional learning in preschoolers can help protect against current and future stressors and challenges (Bornstein, Hahn, & Haynes, 2010; Rose-Krasnor & Denham, 2009). For example, a lack of social and emotional competence can increase the risk of poor social functioning, difficulties with peers (including rejection and withdrawal), emotional and behavioural problems, and academic difficulties (Denham, 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2001; Fantuzzo, Bulotsky, McDermott, Mosca, & Lutz, 2003).

Children reach a number of social and emotional milestones during their pre-school years. From ages three to five years, children are learning important skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness including empathy (Kostelnik, Whiren, Soderman, & Gregory, 2009). Research has found that assisting children with their emotional awareness and regulation can help them acquire empathy (Shipman, Zeman, Fitzgerald, & Swisher, 2003). Empathy is the ability to "conceptualise other people's inner world and to reflect on their thoughts and feelings" (Gillberg, 1992, p. 835). It plays an important role in prosocial behaviours,

developing friendships and morality (Decety, Michalska, & Kinzler, 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2001), behavioural self-management (Belacchi & Farina, 2012; Coplan, 2011), and encourages more positive emotions and perspective-taking abilities (Dunn, Cutting, & Demetriou, 2000; Hastings, Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, Usher, & Bridges, 2000; Moreno, Klute, & Robinson, 2008; Valiente et al., 2004). As such, it is an important skill to support during the early years (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006), particularly given that a lack of empathy can lead to aggression and antisocial behaviour in children (Belacchi & Farina, 2012).

4 The Early Years Coping Project

The studies reported in this chapter are part of the Early Years Coping Project at the University of Melbourne. They validate and expand on the earlier research. The COPE-R Program reported here constitutes Phase Eight of the Early Years Coping research, which is sequenced below:

- **Phase 1—2008:** Identifying preschool children’s coping responses and matching these with parents’ understandings of their children’s coping responses.
- **Phase 2—2009:** Development of the *Early Years Coping Cards*, a teaching and learning tool that depicts a range of visual representations of challenging situations to be used to stimulate children’s verbal responses about their coping strategies (Frydenberg & Deans, 2011).
- **Phase 3—2010:** Application of the *Early Years Coping Cards* in multiple settings (early childhood centres and homes) with teachers and parents (Deans, Frydenberg, & Liang, 2012).
- **Phase 4—2011:** Investigation of parents’ use of the *Early Years Coping Cards* (Phases 1–5: Frydenberg et al., 2014).
- **Phase 5—2012:** *Families Can Do Coping (FCDC) parenting program* (Phases 1–5: Frydenberg et al., 2014).
- **Phase 6—2013:** Families Coping (FC – adapted version of FCDC) parenting program for families from CALD backgrounds and disadvantaged communities—the *Early Years Productive Parenting Program (EYPPP)* (Deans, Liang, & Frydenberg, 2016).
- **Phase 7—2014:** Exploring the relationship between anxiety and coping (Pang, Frydenberg, & Deans, 2015; Yeo, Frydenberg, Northam, & Deans, 2014).
- **Phase 8—2015:** *COPE-R Program for Preschoolers: Teaching empathy and prosocial skills through the Early Years Coping Cards* (Cornell, Dobe, Kaufman, Kiernan, & Frydenberg, 2015); the process of socialisation and embodiment of a Social Emotional Learning program in an early years setting: COPE-R (Deans, Liang, Zapper, & Frydenberg, 2016).

Overall, the findings from the research to date highlight the importance of building a shared language of coping between children, parents, and teachers in

order to effectively engage children in deeper and more meaningful conversations around coping, thereby contributing to healthy adaptation to everyday experiences in the early years. Having developed measurement and visual tools around coping in the early years, the relationship between anxiety and coping has subsequently been explored in numerous ways (Pang et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2014).

5 Anxiety in the Early Years

Given the many transitions, challenges, and stressors faced during these years, some preschoolers can experience very high anxiety (Barton & Zeanah, 1990; Deans, Frydenberg, & Tsurutani, 2010). Anxiety is a natural and adaptive emotional response that prepares the mind and body to deal with perceived threats or danger (Jones, 2006; Rapee, 2012). High levels of anxiety are in fact normal during certain developmental periods (Beesdo, Knappe, & Pine, 2009; Spence, Rapee, McDonald, & Ingram, 2001); for example, common anxieties in the early years include fear of abandonment by significant adults, uncertainty with new situations and unfamiliar people, and specific fears such as those related to animals (Beesdo et al., 2009; Schroder & Gordon, 2002).

However, anxiety becomes a concern when symptoms are prolonged, severe, and interfere with normal functioning and development (Albano & Kendall, 2002; Olatunji, Cisler, & Deacon, 2010). It is estimated that 8–22% of children frequently experience intense anxiety (Raising Children Network, 2016). Given preschoolers' limited life experiences and developing skills, anxiety can have a significant impact on feelings of security and safety (Frydenberg, 2014a), self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficacy (Jones, 2006) and, over time, can negatively affect regions of the brain associated with executive functioning (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2010). If left untreated, a large proportion of children could face long-term impairments, chronic symptoms and/or develop an anxiety disorder (Weissman et al., 1999). It is estimated that 2.5–5% of children meet criteria for an anxiety disorder at any given time in Western general populations (Rapee, Schniering, & Hudson, 2009; Rapee, 2012).

Like older children and adults, specific anxiety types have been identified in preschoolers (Danzig et al., 2013; Luby, 2013). These include generalised anxiety (excessive worrying about multiple areas of life), social anxiety (excessive fear of social situations and of being negatively evaluated by others), separation anxiety (excessive fear when separating from others to whom the child is strongly attached, such as a primary caregiver), specific fears (excessive fear about a particular object or situation), and obsessive-compulsive anxiety (persistent and recurrent thoughts, urges or images, and/or repetitive behaviours, such as hand washing, or mental acts such as counting; American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Edwards, Rapee, Kennedy, & Spence, 2010; Spence et al., 2001).

While there has been a dramatic increase in child anxiety research over the past 15–20 years, little is known about the nature, prevalence, and treatment of anxiety

in the preschool years (Edwards et al., 2010; Rapee, 2012); it is often unrecognised, under-diagnosed and under-treated (Egger & Angold, 2006; Furniss, Beyer, & Guggenmos, 2006). Identifying factors that contribute to or protect a young child from experiencing high anxiety and stress provides the potential for early intervention and prevention (Edwards et al., 2010; Jones, 2006).

6 Coping in the Early Years

How individuals cope with stress matters; successful coping can reduce the impact of stressful circumstances on both physical and mental health (Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003). The majority of coping research to date has focused on adults, with growing research on children; however, adolescence and, even more so, the early years remain under-studied in comparison (Frydenberg, 2014b). Coping in children needs to be studied within the context of development (Compas, 1998; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2009). For example, coping shifts from behavioural to more cognitive responses as children develop (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007, 2009) and continues to change in quality throughout childhood and into adolescence (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2009).

Studies have found that preschoolers are capable of articulating a wide range of coping strategies for different situations (Blair, Denham, Kochanoff, & Whipple, 2004; Chalmers, Frydenberg, & Deans, 2011; Deans et al., 2010; Tsurutani, 2009). However, growing research suggests that typical adult dichotomies are not appropriate for children's coping. Studies have found that coping in young children did not align with the common adult taxonomies of problem-focused versus emotion-focused coping or active versus passive coping (Ayers, Sandier, West, & Roosa, 1996; Walker Smith, Garber, & Van Slyke, 1997). More recently, researchers identified a three-component model of coping in preschoolers, which included a positive coping style, and two negative coping styles: emotional *expression* and emotional *inhibition* (Pang et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2014). The positive coping dimension was comprised of strategies such as "Play", "Chat to Friends", and "Work Hard". The two negative coping dimensions were comprised of strategies considered to be more distressing for the child or caregiver; the emotional *expression* dimension reflected overtly expressed emotions such as "Lose it", "Cry or scream", and "Keep away from other children", while the emotional *inhibition* dimension reflected internalised emotions such as "Keep feelings to self", "Get sick", and "Don't let others know how they are feeling". Beyond this research, evidence on empirically derived taxonomies of coping in preschoolers is scarce.

To contribute to the research on coping in preschoolers, a recent study (Kiernan, 2015) conducted a series of principal component analyses (PCAs) on the three forms of the Children's Coping Scale—Revised; each form measuring a different coping situation (CCS-R; Yeo et al., 2014). The CCS-R consists of 29 child-specific coping strategies which parents rate on a three-point Likert scale (Never, Sometimes, A Lot) across three situations: how the child copes *in general* (the

General Coping situation/form) and across two *specific situations*. The two specific situations are when the child has to say goodbye to their parent/s (Saying Goodbye situation/form), and when the child has to do something he/she does not like (Dislike situation/form). PCA is a statistical technique used to identify a smaller number of variables, “principal components”, from a larger dataset (Field, 2013). The aim of these PCAs was to make sense of the children’s coping strategies from the CCS-R parent report by identifying the fewest number of coping components.

The sample size for each PCA varied from 69 to 70 for mothers and 58–59 for fathers. When the CCS-R was reduced to a smaller number of components, three different coping styles (positive coping, negative coping-emotional *expression*, and negative coping-emotional *inhibition*) were found to capture the children’s coping strategies and these three coping styles were identified in preschoolers. In addition, the two specific situations, especially Saying Goodbye, were found to be the most reliable of the three situations (i.e., General Coping, Saying Goodbye, Dislike), meaning that these *situation-specific* forms better measure the three coping styles, which is most consistent with previous research (Pang et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2014).

These findings suggest that the *situation-specific* coping forms are more robust at producing consistent and reliable components, particularly the Saying Goodbye form, making it the preferable measure of coping if only one form was feasible for a preschooler. This study provided further evidence for a three-component model of coping in preschoolers and suggested that preschoolers already employ some positive and some negative coping strategies for dealing with stress. The CCS-R is one tool, with growing empirical validation, for helping to identify the positive and negative coping strategies utilised by preschoolers.

Further to this, Kiernan (2015) explored the relationships between coping (as measured by the CCS-R) and children’s mental health (as measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ); Goodman, 2001). The SDQ is a brief screening instrument for child and adolescent mental health and is used widely in both clinical and community-based research (Goodman, Ford, Simmons, Gatward, & Meltzer, 2003; Vostanis, 2006; Woerner et al., 2004). The SDQ is comprised of 25 questions which parents rate on a three-point Likert scale (Not true, Somewhat true, Certainly true), and the results typically derive five dimensions of children’s mental health: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer problems, and prosocial behaviour. Kiernan’s (2015) research obtained a significant positive association between positive coping and positive mental health (prosocial behaviour), and significant associations between negative coping and some aspects of poor mental health. Specifically, negative coping-emotional *inhibition* was positively associated with emotional symptoms, peer problems, and total problems on the SDQ, while negative coping-emotional *expression* was positively associated with conduct problems and negatively associated with prosocial behaviour.

These patterns of associations provide evidence of construct validity for the component structure of the CCS-R. That is, the positive coping dimension reflects behaviours that are viewed as positive or socially acceptable by parents/caregivers, the negative coping-emotional *inhibition* dimension reflects negative internalised behaviours, and the negative coping-emotional *expression* dimension reflects

negative externalised behaviours. Additionally, emotional *inhibition* was the coping style associated with the greatest overall difficulties. These findings suggest that the employment of more positive coping is associated with more positive mental health (or at least more prosocial behaviour) and that more negative coping is associated with more mental health problems. Such findings highlight an opportunity to teach children a wider range of positive coping strategies and help them to unlearn negative ones, perhaps particularly strategies associated with emotional *inhibition*.

7 Preschoolers' Coping Styles When Highly Anxious

Given the nature of high anxiety (e.g., heightened arousal, inappropriate cognitive appraisals, avoidance, behavioural inhibition), research suggests that highly anxious children are more likely to engage in more negative coping and less positive coping. Only two studies have examined this relationship using the aforementioned three-component model of coping, with mixed findings (Pang et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2014). A more recent study (Cornell, 2015) investigated this relationship further by using responses from 72 mothers of preschoolers who completed the CCS-R, along with the Preschool Anxiety Scale (PAS; Spence et al., 2001). The PAS measures a wide range of anxiety symptoms in preschoolers through the use of parent report. On a five-point Likert scale (Not true at all, Seldom true, Sometimes true, Quite often true, Very often true), parents rate how true 34 anxiety symptoms are for their child, which are used to generate an overall anxiety score along with five specific anxiety scores: generalised anxiety, social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive anxiety, specific fears, and separation anxiety.

By conducting a series of correlations and regression analyses, it was found that the coping styles used by anxious preschoolers often differed depending on the type of specific situation and anxiety experienced. Consistent with previous research (Pang et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2014), a significant relationship between coping and overall anxiety was found; as anxiety increased in preschoolers so did their negative coping. However, negative coping styles often changed according to the specific situation being faced. As overall anxiety increased in the Dislike situation, emotional *inhibition* coping increased. In contrast, in the Saying Goodbye situation, emotional *expression* coping increased.

To understand the relationship between coping and anxiety in more depth, the study also examined this relationship with five specific anxiety types. Of the five anxiety types generated from the PAS responses, the study found significant relationships between coping and generalised anxiety, separation anxiety, and social anxiety. Generally, negative coping varied not only across the specific situations but also across these different anxiety types. As generalised anxiety increased, positive coping decreased for both specific situations; however, emotional *inhibition* increased in the Dislike situation and emotional *expression* increased in the Saying Goodbye situation. Generalised anxiety includes symptoms such as restlessness, fatigue, and difficulties concentrating (American Psychiatric Association, 2013;

Spence et al., 2001), which may explain why positive coping decreased and negative coping increased. Positive coping may require too much effort and energy for anxious preschoolers; however, expressing or inhibiting emotions may be providing symptomatic relief, even if momentarily.

For separation anxiety, a significant relationship with coping was only found in the Saying Goodbye situation, in particular with negative coping-emotional *expression*. This finding is not unexpected given that symptoms of separation anxiety include overt emotions such as sadness, anger, and attention-seeking when separated from significant others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Spence et al., 2001). In such situations, preschoolers may be using a form of problem-focused coping as these overt emotions may gain an adult's attention, and separation may be delayed or avoided, an outcome which the anxious preschooler desires (Compas et al., 2001).

Social anxiety was the only anxiety type to result in a consistent coping style across situations; as social anxiety increased, only negative coping-emotional *inhibition* increased in both the Dislike and Saying Goodbye situations. Given that a feature of social anxiety is a fear of being negatively evaluated by others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), being more inhibited than expressive is not unexpected for both situations. As to whether preschoolers would have engaged in emotional *inhibition* rather than *expression* to cope in a specific anxiety provoking "social" situation would be an interesting hypothesis to pursue (e.g., when can we expect socially anxious preschoolers to express their fears?).

Given that coping styles were often variable across anxiety types, it is recommended researchers and practitioners go beyond viewing anxiety as a general construct and to also pay attention to preschoolers' specific experiences of anxiety (Edwards et al., 2010; Spence et al., 2001). Consistent with Kiernan's (2015) findings, this study also highlights the importance of examining preschoolers' coping in *specific situations* to obtain a more accurate profile of coping styles. Researchers and practitioners may like to adapt the CCS-R by asking parents to rate their child's coping abilities for a specific situation he/she finds most anxiety provoking. Furthermore, the present study provides support for incorporating coping skills in early intervention programs, particularly when studies have found more active coping strategies can lower internalising symptoms (Compas et al., 2001). Gaining such social and emotional competence also can assist children to build resilience against stressors (Denham, 2013).

8 Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Preschool-Aged Children: The COPE-R Program

It is evident that programs targeted at enhancing prosocial skills have the ability to promote positive development in children (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008; Durlak et al., 2011; Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Flook et al., 2015). A recent study (Kaufman, 2015) evaluated COPE-R, a five-week SEL pilot program

delivered by teachers to facilitate the development of empathy and prosocial skills in preschool-aged children.

As described earlier, the COPE-R Program emerged from The Early Years Coping Project that was undertaken to understand the social and emotional development of four to eight year old children (Chalmers et al., 2011). To enhance children's knowledge and understanding of feelings, and to learn how to care for others, communicate openly, behave in a polite and respectful manner, and empathise and share with others, a range of age-appropriate activities were used to deliver the COPE-R Program; these included the use of the Early Years Situation Coping Cards along with role-plays, feeling detective games, art activities, singing, and dancing. A selection of the Early Years Situation Coping Cards that related to each of the COPE-R themes were used by teachers as a prompt for discussion and reflection about what children might feel and do in particular situations. Role-plays provided children with an experiential opportunity to practice skills being learnt. Feeling detective games involved fun detective cases where children needed to consider questions asked by the teacher and to look for clues to assist their understanding and problem solving. Art activities such as drawing enabled children to use their creativity and imagination while learning, and singing and dancing exercises provided children with another medium to learn and practice skills.

The COPE-R Program¹ addressed the following core themes and topics:

Care for Others

- examined caring behaviours, how to show others you care, recognising caring acts (e.g., The Early Years Situation Coping Card activity involved showing children the "Getting hurt" card which depicted a cartoon image of a boy with a hurt knee. Children were asked questions about this situation, how they might feel, and what they could do to care for the boy).

Open Communication

- addressed the importance of communicating with others, listening skills, verbal/nonverbal communication, expressing concerns for others (e.g., as a singing/dancing activity, children were asked to display various verbal and nonverbal communication messages, such as using the head or face to communicate "yes", using the hands and arms to communicate "hello/goodbye", and using the whole body to communicate "I'm confident").

Politeness

- looked at respectful behaviours, appreciating individual differences, understanding the outcomes of polite and impolite behaviours, how to identify and display polite behaviours such as gratitude (e.g., a pretend tea party was set up

¹Specific details about the program can be found on the University of Melbourne Early Learning Centre website.

and children were asked to role-play polite behaviours to each other when the teacher provided different scenarios).

Empathic Sharing

- focused on understanding the value of sharing with others, emotions elicited by sharing, appropriate ways to ask to share, benefits of sharing (e.g., the feeling detective game involved children guessing emotions that the teacher was expressing where clues included her facial expressions and body language).

Review

- a review and consolidation of the concepts taught throughout the program (e.g., care for others was reviewed by using an art activity where children were asked to draw pictures of caring acts that could be used as present and future reminders for caring).

Kaufman's (2015) evaluation of COPE-R involved obtaining parents' comments about changes they noticed in their child's behaviours following the implementation of the program. Data were obtained from 24 mothers and 7 fathers, which were analysed by conducting a thematic analysis of parent's written responses post-program; the thematic analysis grouped parents' responses according to the themes of the COPE-R Program. Additional qualitative data, in the form of drawings and comments made by preschoolers during the program, were also collected to understand the children's perspectives and understanding of the program materials.

A thematic analysis of parents' responses indicated that after the COPE-R Program, parents noticed an increase in prosocial behaviour and communication skills. For example, one parent noted, "*he's been talking more about other people's feelings*", while another parent acknowledged their child is "*getting better at talking about things that are troubling him rather than yelling or crying*". Another parent found that their child "*now will say sorry or give you a pat if he hits you and hurts you by accident*", while another parent indicated "*she appears to be more aware of being caring towards family members*". These findings, which suggest the program had a positive effect on preschoolers' prosocial behaviours, support previous research that SEL programs can impact positively on preschool-aged children (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Flook et al., 2015; Larmar, Dadde, & Schochet, 2006; Mussen & Eisenberg, 2001; Webster-Stratton et al., 2008). Regarding communication skills post the COPE-R Program parents noticed, in particular, an increase in their child's expression of feelings as well as enhanced vocabulary. These findings are consistent with previous research, which has found that providing children with the vocabulary to describe feelings and emotions deepens awareness of their own as well as another's emotions (Crosser, 1996; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Miller, 1990).

Drawings, narratives, and comments made by preschoolers throughout the program also provided support that COPE-R facilitated preschoolers' understanding of caring for others, open communication, politeness, and empathic sharing. By having drawing activities throughout the program, children were given many

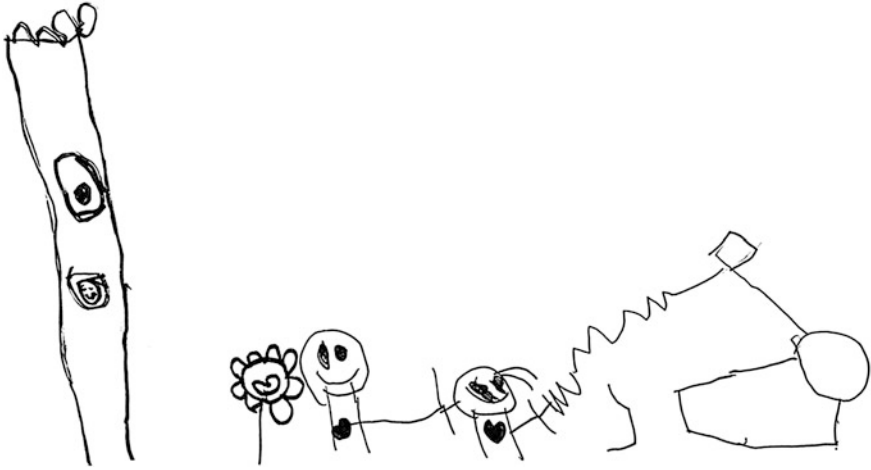


Fig. 1 Care for others: “My brother cut his finger on a lawn mower one day. He was crying and he was so upset. I gave him a cuddle and a cloth to put on his finger until my dad came.”



Fig. 2 Care for others: “My Eyes are prickly because I am crying. My friends took me to a beautiful garden and they said—these flowers are for you. I love flowers the best.”

opportunities for self-reflection (Ju, 2014) and to think about and relate to the concepts in a personally meaningful way, as illustrated in the following examples (Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4).

Rather than being “passive recipients of knowledge” (Wright, 2010, p. 7), these drawings illustrate preschoolers’ active engagement in the program and provide insight into children’s understanding of the concepts in a naturalistic way. Furthermore, accompanying narratives to the children’s drawings also provides additional evidence that these preschoolers were able to comprehend the topics taught during the COPE-R Program and could make sense of the concepts from their own point of view.

These findings provide preliminary evidence that the COPE-R Program can be effective at increasing prosocial behaviours in preschool-aged children. With more



Fig. 3 Politeness: “Mum is giving me a book as a present, I am saying ‘thank you mum’.”



Fig. 4 Empathic sharing: “Sharing a biscuit with mum.”

empirical research, the COPE-R Program could become a valuable addition to the range of SEL programs available in Australia for preschool-aged children. Outcomes later in life can be significantly affected by social and emotional difficulties, and given that empathy and prosocial behaviours relate to a range of positive outcomes both socially and academically, this pilot study provides support for the promotion of these skills during the early years.

9 Mothers' and Fathers' Perceptions of Their Children's Behaviour

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of children's behaviours, it is important to have multiple informants (Sointu, Savolainen, Lappalainen, & Epstein, 2012). Research has found that mothers and fathers can be the most important source of information for identifying emotional and behavioural difficulties in their children (Achenbach, McConaughty, & Howell, 1987). They can usually provide details of their child's developmental history, their typical behaviours and personality, along with their everyday behaviours at home and in other settings (e.g., preschool; Diamond & Squires, 1993). Agreements between mothers' and fathers' ratings of their children's behaviours, however, have been found to be less than perfect (Bingham, Loukas, Fitzgerald, & Zucker, 2003). Research studies commonly find that mothers identify their children's behaviours more easily than fathers, as mothers tend to be the primary caregivers and usually spend more time with their children (Fitzgerald, Zucker, Maguin, & Reider, 1994; Leonard et al., 2000). It has also been suggested that fathers are less likely to notice problematic behaviours compared to mothers (Achenbach et al., 1987).

A study by Dobe (2015) also investigated parents' perceptions of their children's behaviours following participation in COPE-R, in particular whether there was a difference between mothers' and fathers' perceptions of their children's prosocial behaviours. Twenty-four mothers and 22 fathers completed the CCS-R and the SDQ pre- and post-program. Qualitative data were also obtained from 18 mothers and 11 fathers about their children's behaviours following the program.

To determine whether there were differences between mothers' and fathers' ratings, a series of split-plot analysis of variances were performed. The findings indicated that at post-program both parents reported a decrease in emotional *inhibition* (e.g., doing nothing, giving up) in the General Coping situation. This is consistent with Seiffge-Krenke and Kollmar's (1998) study which reported that mothers' and fathers' ratings tend to be consistent when considering their children's internalising behaviours such as being socially withdrawn. However, only the mothers reported a decrease in emotional *expression* (e.g., crying and screaming) which was only found to occur in the Dislike situation. An explanation for this finding could lie in the qualitative data where 78% of mothers indicated they noticed an improvement in their children's communication skills post-program.

Children may have become better at expressing themselves verbally when troubled by a situation, which may have resulted in less reliance on expressing their emotions.

In relation to prosocial behaviours, mothers noted an increase in these behaviours post-program. In contrast, fathers reported a decrease in prosocial behaviours following the program. One possible explanation for this difference is that fathers may not have noticed a positive change in their children's prosocial behaviour. As discussed, mothers tend to spend more time with their children; thus, if there was an increase in prosocial behaviour, they may have been more likely to have noticed it. The SDQ can also be a very sensitive measure, so it has been recommended that teachers' ratings on the SDQ be obtained where possible, along with using observations (Stone, Otten, Engels, Vermulst, & Janssens, 2010). Both researchers and practitioners may like to consider using multiple measures when obtaining mothers' and fathers' perspectives about their children, and to also include teachers' perceptions and observations in the classroom and playground.

These findings have provided some insights into how mothers and fathers perceive their children's coping and prosocial behaviours and illustrate the importance of providing both parents the opportunity to comment on their child's behaviours. It may also have implications when tailoring parenting interventions to support children's social emotional learning; for example, COPE-R may like to also consider a parent component to assist their child's social and emotional skill development.

10 Concluding Comments

The body of research and practice presented in this chapter has shown that during the early years, children are capable of identifying and articulating their concerns and experiences, and that by preschool (three and four years of age), they can engage in coping behaviours, using both positive and negative strategies (Cornell, 2015; Dobe, 2015; Kiernan, 2015; Pang et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2014). There is evidence that preschoolers' coping can be measured and the Children's Coping Scale—Revised (CCS-R) is one measurement tool with growing empirical validation (Kiernan, 2015; Pang et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2014). Kiernan's (2015) study highlights that for the most accurate measurement of coping in this age group, situation-specific coping, pertaining to a salient issue for the child in question, is recommended.

Examining that mental health correlates with coping, it was found that positive coping is associated with positive mental health (prosocial behaviour) and negative coping is associated with some aspects of poor mental health, with emotional *inhibition* being associated with the most problems overall (Kiernan, 2015). Research also found that when preschoolers are highly anxious, they are more likely to engage in negative coping, and that their choice of coping style can change according to the specific situation and the actual anxiety experienced. Negative

coping was found to be associated with generalised anxiety, social anxiety, and separation anxiety (Cornell, 2015). Such findings emphasise the importance of teaching children as young as three and four years of age positive coping strategies and helping them to reduce negative (e.g., emotional *expression* and emotional *inhibition*) coping strategies.

Studies also provided some insights into how children in the early years can be taught social emotional skills at the level of both self-awareness and social awareness, two of CASEL's core SEL competencies (CASEL, 2013). In this exploratory research in an early childhood setting where teachers trialled the COPE-R Program and brought their own skills and expertise to its delivery, it was found that it is possible to enhance empathy, prosocial skills, communication skills, and expression of feelings in preschoolers. Children were found to understand and gain a larger vocabulary around sharing, caring, politeness, and open communication (Dobee, 2015; Kaufman, 2015). Reports from parents indicated that the program assisted with decreasing their child's use of negative coping strategies in certain situations (Dobee, 2015). These preliminary findings suggest that SEL teaching practices, including the use of programs such as COPE-R, can be used as a resource to help children improve their social and emotional competence. Given that social and emotional competence has been linked to emotional well-being and good mental health (Denham, 2013), it follows that if children are supported in enhancing their social and emotional competence, including their ability to cope effectively, then the impact of negative experiences, stressors, and anxieties on normal functioning may be reduced.

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Building Teacher Capacity to Promote Social and Emotional Learning in Australia

Elizabeth Freeman and Desma Strong

Abstract The role that schools play in promoting young people's positive psychological functioning is well recognised and supported by an expanding evidence base. Central to fulfilling this role is the development of capacity in the teacher workforce. Teachers require a sound understanding of the important contribution of social and emotional skills to learning and wellbeing, and the capacity to confidently and skilfully engage in developing students' social and emotional competencies. A range of professional learning approaches have been adopted to improve teachers' capabilities to implement social emotional learning. This chapter will describe one approach, a 2 year, part-time postgraduate programme that aims specifically to assist teachers learn more about their role in social and emotional learning and promoting student wellbeing. The programme rationale, content and pedagogy will be described. The nexus between personal and professional learning will be highlighted alongside the need for teachers to develop an understanding of the implementation processes required to successfully engage others in social and emotional learning initiatives. The chapter will focus on the role of university–system partnerships in building teacher workforce capacity drawing upon the experience of a 16 year partnership between an educational system in Victoria, Australia, and a university school of education. It will explore the impact of postgraduate study on participating teachers and on system capacity to promote a social and emotional wellbeing strategy. The challenges in this agenda and emerging possibilities for professional learning in the domain of social and emotional learning are considered.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Social and emotional competence · Teachers · Teacher training · Teacher learning · Student wellbeing

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The potential of schools to promote young people's positive psychological functioning is well recognised and supported by an expanding evidence base (e.g., Bonell et al. 2014; Durlak et al. 2015; Weare 2010). The development of capacity in the teacher workforce is an essential factor in realising this potential. Teachers require a sound understanding of the important contribution of social and emotional skills to learning and wellbeing, and the ability to confidently and skilfully engage in developing students' social and emotional competencies. In this chapter, we consider the issue of building teacher capacity to effectively implement social and emotional learning (SEL) and how this might be achieved. We briefly examine a range of extant approaches and then discuss a case study of an Australian university–education system partnership to build teachers' capacity to promote social and emotional learning and wellbeing. Following Flaspohler et al. (2008), in this chapter, capacity refers to 'the skills, motivations, knowledge, and attitudes that underlie the accomplishment of actions or tasks' (p. 182). Capacity overlaps significantly with the concept of competency and, in this context, relates to the skills, motivations, knowledge and attitudes required for effective implementation of SEL.

1 Social and Emotional Learning: Australian Policy Context

The premise embedded in key Australian policy documents and programmes is that teachers are well positioned to contribute to students' social emotional learning. Implied expectations of teachers include not only the delivery of specific SEL programmes but the integration of SEL concepts into a range of curriculum areas and the modelling of social emotional competence in pedagogical approaches and in the conduct of relationships in the school. Policy documents such as *The Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2008) identify the pivotal role schools play in developing social and emotional competencies as part of a comprehensive education that aims to deliver valued personal, social and economic outcomes. The Australian National Curriculum incorporates 'personal and social capabilities' in its list of capabilities (ACARA 2016). This emphasis is reflected in corresponding state and territory curriculum guidelines. For example, the Victorian Curriculum (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2016) also uses the term 'personal and social capability', directly references SEL and names the *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)* as the leading organisation promoting SEL. Furthermore, both Australian national mental health promotion initiatives, *MindMatters* (<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/>) for secondary schools and *KidsMatter* (<https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>) for primary schools, include SEL as a central component in their frameworks. Victoria's new *Building Resilience Framework* (Victorian Department of Education and Training n.d.) includes learning resources for a sequenced Foundation to Year 12 social

emotional learning curriculum (<https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/View.aspx?pin=5DZ88S>). The often unchallenged assumption in these policies and programmes is that teachers already possess the range of knowledge, beliefs and skills required for the effective implementation of SEL.

2 SEL Implementation: Teacher Capacity

Converging strands of research support the necessity of building teacher capacity to implement effective SEL programmes and initiatives. The SEL field can learn from the extensive research on a range of educational reforms suggesting that to expect implementation of reforms without adequate preparation of educators is unlikely to be successful (e.g., Stoll 2009). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the rapidly evolving field of implementation science which emphasises the need to address competency drivers, alongside organisational and leadership drivers, for the effective implementation of programmes (Blase et al. 2015; Fixsen et al. 2005; Lewis 2015).

A review of the impact of a national secondary schools' initiative in the UK, *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)*, which was not uniformly successful, concluded that amongst a number of factors impacting on implementation, 'staff "will and skill", in addition to time and resource allocation, as being the most crucial in driving implementation forward (or, indeed, holding it back)' (Humphrey et al. 2010, p. 2). Durlak (2015) and Durlak and DuPre (2008) identify programme dosage, fidelity and quality as three key implementation features that contribute to positive outcomes for students. These features are integrally connected to teacher capacity which is, in turn, influenced by the quality of professional learning available to support teachers introducing new SEL programmes.

3 Professional Learning for SEL Delivery

While SEL is accepted, in principle, by many educators as cultivating valuable enabling skills for students (e.g., Bridgeland et al. 2013), and evidence suggests that teachers can deliver SEL programmes effectively (Durlak et al. 2011), it has been argued that more preparation is needed in both pre-service and in-service education (Jennings and Frank 2015). Recent audits of teacher education programmes in the USA and Canada showed limited to no time allocated to implementing SEL for students or to the development of pre-service teachers' own social emotional competency (SEC)¹ (Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015). The national accreditation

¹In this chapter, following the research literature, the term social emotional learning (SEL) is used when referring to students and the term social emotional competence (SEC) is used when referring to teachers.

requirements for Australian pre-service programmes (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2015) indicate a similar lack of attention to these areas.

Despite the paucity of SEL-related preparation in pre-service teacher education courses, a range of in-service professional development approaches have been adopted to support teacher implementation of SEL. Where professional development is offered, as in other professional development domains, a continuum of approaches exists from self-help, piecemeal professional learning of short-duration, programme-specific training and support to comprehensive sustained professional learning. Some SEL programmes provide manuals, without accompanying professional development, with the expectation that these materials will be sufficient to enable teachers to deliver the programme. Short-duration models in the form of conferences, one-off in-service days or workshops are common. These models have been extensively critiqued in broader discussions of professional development because they fail to deliver the intended outcomes of changes in teacher practice (see Darling-Hammond et al. 2009; Little 1993). Some SEL programme developers provide more substantial professional development to support teacher understanding of programme aims, principles, structure and pedagogy.

One example of more substantial professional development is that offered for the implementation of *RULER* (*Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating Emotions*), an emotional intelligence programme for students. The YALE Center for Emotional Intelligence delivers blended training including online coursework, four days of face-to-face training (across 2 years), and access to online resources and supports (<http://ei.yale.edu/ruler/>). The stated aims of training are to develop teachers' skills, knowledge and capacity to model emotional intelligence and, notably, to develop an implementation plan for their school community. Opportunities are afforded to schools to network with other schools implementing *RULER*. Positive outcomes have been reported in studies of *RULER*, including gains in student academic and social and emotional skills and improvement in school climate (Brackett et al. 2012; Rivers et al. 2013). In a study of *RULER* implementation, Reyes et al. (2012) found that that student outcomes were affected by a combination of teacher implementation factors including the quantity of training, number of *RULER* lessons taught and the quality of teaching (i.e., valuing SEL programming and a teaching style consistent with the programme philosophy).

4 Teacher Social and Emotional Competence

A different approach to support teachers' implementation of SEL focuses on the development of teachers' own SEC. Such programmes are not linked to the delivery of a specific SEL programme, but are grounded in the view that teachers' own SEC enhances teaching practice and teacher wellbeing. This enables teachers to create positive classroom environments, manage teaching challenges and model SEL competencies for their students (Brown et al. 2010; Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015).

Preceding the development of SEL models and frameworks, *Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET)* has been offered since the 1970s by Gordon Training International (www.gordontraining.com/) to educators with an interest in the emotional and social dimensions of their relationships with students. More recently, a direct connection with teacher SEC has been made (Talvio et al. 2013). TET's experiential exercises to develop teachers' active listening, assertion and conflict management skills are designed to assist teachers in building the autonomy and responsibility of students and are consistent with the aim of building students' SEL through the development of teachers' own SEC. In a small comparison group study, Talvio et al. (2013) investigated the impact of participation in TET on Finnish teachers' social interaction skills. They reported promising results in the development of teacher knowledge and knowledge (skills) application.

Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) is an example of a more recent programme to foster teacher social and emotional competence (Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Jennings et al. 2013). Offered by the Garrison Institute in New York in four-day-long sessions spaced over four to five weeks, a mix of didactic instruction and experiential activities supports teachers' practice, application and reflection. The sessions include emotion skills instruction, mindfulness and empathy development activities and are complemented by phone and Internet coaching between sessions (<http://www.garrisoninstitute.org/signature-programs/care-for-teachers/>). A small randomised control trial of CARE demonstrated significant improvements in teacher wellbeing, efficacy, stress levels and mindfulness compared with controls, and the programme was well received by teachers (Jennings et al. 2013). Positive findings have also been reported for related programmes which focus on developing the skill of self-management through varied contemplative practices (e.g., Flook et al. 2013; Harris et al. 2015; Kemeney et al. 2012).

It could be expected that programmes focussed on the development of teacher social and emotional skills, such as self-awareness and self-management, would enhance teacher delivery of SEL. The impact of teacher SEC on the quality of delivery of SEL programmes is an area requiring further investigation (Reyes et al. 2012). Effects on classroom and student outcomes were not directly studied in the initial trials of CARE discussed above. However, the early results of a larger randomised control study of CARE in New York City elementary schools indicate that the CARE programme not only promotes teachers SEC and wellbeing but is also associated with observable improvement in classroom climate and productivity (Jennings et al. 2016).

5 Postgraduate Study: Master of Education (Student Wellbeing)

In addition to professional development of the types discussed above, universities also offer accredited courses to support the ongoing learning of teachers. Usually undertaken over a longer period of time these courses require not only exposure to

current theory, research and practice, but also extensive engagement with ideas through seminars, reading and assignment work. As previously mentioned, there are few programmes at either the pre-service or postgraduate level that focus solely on developing teacher knowledge and skills related to SEL or their own SEC. One exception is the provision of specific SEL pathway in the 12-month teacher preparation and also in postgraduate programmes at the University of British Columbia in Canada (see <http://teach.educ.ubc.ca/bachelor-of-education-program/elementary-middle-years/>). In the Australian context, a unique postgraduate course, the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing)², is offered at the University of Melbourne (http://education.unimelb.edu.au/study_with_us/professional_development/course_list/student_wellbeing). This course has the specific aim of enhancing the capacity of teachers and school leaders to support the social and emotional wellbeing of students and is discussed in detail below.

To locate the programme in a historical context, the course commenced in 1981, predating the establishment of CASEL in 1994 and the publication of CASEL co-founder, Goleman's (1995), seminal work *Emotional Intelligence*. However, it reflected the long-standing view that the goals of education should be based on a holistic view of the child with the aim of educating children to be responsible, productive, caring and active citizens. Thus, the programme was developed before the term 'social emotional learning' entered the educational lexicon and preceding the more recent focus on SEL research, policy and practice. The original programme had its origins in the person-centred approaches of humanistic psychology and terminology included 'student care', 'student welfare', and later 'student wellbeing', reflecting its emphasis on students' social and emotional wellbeing and development. Some key principles underlying the programme included the assumption that all teachers have a role in the promotion of social and emotional wellbeing and that effective caring by teachers for their students social and emotional wellbeing must be accompanied by teacher SEC. This emphasis on teacher SEC was embodied in the course motto, '*Translating Caring into Action*'.

The development of the course was originally predicated on observations that teachers were uncertain and lacked confidence when they moved outside traditional content-focused teaching (Freeman 1997; Keegel and Freeman 1998). Changing and challenging social contexts required teachers to adopt more learner-centred approaches and to develop the capacity and confidence to respond constructively to the social and emotional wellbeing needs of students. With subsequent years, the Australian evidence supporting this conclusion has continued to mount. Graham and colleagues' (2011) study of Australian teachers' perspectives on student social and emotional wellbeing found that while most recognised the important role they played, many felt burdened by students' mental health needs and underprepared for

²The Master of Education (Student Wellbeing), now offered in the Graduate School of Education, the University of Melbourne, was preceded by the Postgraduate Diploma in Education Studies (Student Welfare), the Graduate Diploma in Student Welfare and the Graduate Diploma in Student Care. The latter courses were first offered at Hawthorn Institute of Education which subsequently amalgamated with the University of Melbourne.

engagement in mental health promotion and prevention in their schools (see also Askell-Williams and Lawson 2013; Mazzer and Rickwood 2015). These findings parallel international evidence (e.g., Reinke et al. 2011). The course was established to address this identified gap by providing teachers with theory, research and skills that would enable them to understand and cater for the social and emotional needs of students.

The current course objectives, curriculum and pedagogy focus on how schools can create health-promoting environments that address the social and emotional needs of all students. The content and structure address a range of components that have been shown to contribute to school environments that positively influence students’ social, emotional and academic learning. The initial course accreditation documentation articulated the goal of enabling ‘teachers to more effectively facilitate the educational achievement and development of social and life management skills of students’ (Council of State College of Victoria, Hawthorn 1980, p. 3). To achieve this goal, it was proposed that the course incorporate consideration of school policies, programmes, strategies and processes that relate to the social and emotional wellbeing of students. In a ‘whole-school approach’ to wellbeing, it was expected that these elements would be reflected in the stated aims of the school, the structural organisation of the school, in the curriculum and its implementation, in the provision of appropriate facilities and resources and in the relationships between staff and students, staff and staff and between the school and its community (Freeman et al. 2003, p. 281).

Two complementary strands in the course structure (see Fig. 1) reflect course aims. Teachers require specific interpersonal skills and SEC to build strong teacher–student relationships and also a set of understandings and skills to prepare ‘them to take a leadership role in the design, implementation and evaluation of student wellbeing policy, programmes and practices’ in their schools (The University of

Year 1	
Strand 1	Strand 2
Relationship Skills for Educators 1	Student Wellbeing: Current Approaches
Relationship Skills for Educators 2	Linking School and Community
Year 2	
Interpersonal and Group Processes	Leading Change for Student Wellbeing
Negotiated Project in Student Wellbeing	

Fig. 1 Course structure: Master of Education (Student Wellbeing)

Melbourne 2017). Thus, the programme emphasises that teachers committed to promoting wellbeing for all students in their schools must be able to work strategically and collaboratively with their colleagues to ensure that social and emotional aspects of learning are embedded in school policy and practice.

The course draws upon interdisciplinary perspectives and is based in an ecological systems perspective (e.g., Bronfenbrenner 1979) to underscore that social and emotional wellbeing is the product of complex interactions between the individual and a range of contextual factors. Research on risk, resilience and protective factors for positive youth development is introduced. Examination of models of prevention and early intervention, and the evidence base for pedagogical, curricula and whole-school approaches to wellbeing, enables participants to critically evaluate provisions for social and emotional wellbeing in their own schools.

6 Course Curriculum and Pedagogy

The course curriculum and pedagogy have continuously reflected a number of the areas now seen to be essential components of teacher preparation to deliver effective SEL programmes. The course provides exposure to the theory and research underpinning the SEL and wellbeing domains, positioning social and emotional wellbeing as intrinsically valuable and a legitimate goal of education. Also, as Schonert-Reichl and Zakrzewski (2014) argue, many teachers have not been exposed to research demonstrating the connection between social and emotional learning and academic success. Developing an understanding of the important contribution of social and emotional skills to student learning and wellbeing strengthens the rationale for the investment of time teaching SEL when competing demands and accountability for academic outcomes create pressure and difficult choices for teachers (e.g., Wigelsworth et al. 2013). Given the plethora of SEL programmes, teachers also need to know how to access sufficient information to make an assessment of the evidence base of particular SEL programmes to avoid reliance on advocacy by those with predominantly commercial interests. Therefore, a critical perspective is fostered in assessment tasks.

The potential link between teacher SEC and effective teaching of SEL is receiving greater attention (Jennings and Greenberg 2009; Zinsser et al. 2015). Teachers who possess SEC are modelling these competencies for their students. Parker J Palmer of the *Centre for Courage and Renewal* in the USA described this connection eloquently when he said ‘We teach who we are’ (Palmer 2007, p. 2). To model SEC, teachers need to be provided with opportunities to increase their self-awareness through reflection on their behaviour and its impact. Palmer again captures the essence of this dimension of self-awareness, ‘Good teaching requires self-knowledge: it is a secret hidden in plain sight’ (p. 3). Therefore, the course acknowledges and values the interplay between the personal and the professional in teaching and provides opportunities for participants to consider and enhance their own SEC. Strategic assessment tasks require participants to reflect on themselves,

their relationships and work context in the light of new knowledge and new perspectives. An area of SEC which becomes a focus of reflection and critical evaluation by teachers includes how they use interpersonal skills to build supportive relationships, to resolve conflict and to operate effectively in groups. Thus, the course aligns with the view that to support the high-quality implementation of SEL, we need to provide opportunities for teachers not only to learn more about SEL, but also to examine their own SEC (Hanson 2012; Jennings and Greenberg 2009).

Modelling SEC requires teachers to engage in emotional regulation, a self-management skill. Emotional regulation by teachers is a prerequisite for setting firm boundaries, disagreeing respectfully or dealing with conflict. When teachers are able to understand themselves and effectively regulate their emotions, they are free to be more responsive to their students' learning, social and emotional needs. Teachers who adopt an intentional and reflective approach are more able to create a safe, supportive and engaging learning environment that contributes to positive SEL as well as academic outcomes (e.g., Astbury and Aston 2013; Hanson 2012; Le Cornu and Peters 2005). Skill development activities in the course allow participants to explore their characteristic ways of responding and to rehearse purposeful, rather than reactive or habitual, responses. Therefore, participants have the opportunity to acquire skills and a sense of self-efficacy to respond confidently and supportively to students' social and emotional needs and to teach social and emotional competencies.

The course is delivered in a face-to-face mode and is underpinned by two key principles of adult learning (Knowles et al. 2015). Participants' knowledge and experience is respected, and the application of new knowledge to problems of immediate relevance is prioritised. The group is viewed as a resource and a relational, caring network that can support and extend each individual's learning. The role of emotion in learning (Hargreaves 2000, 2005) is discussed explicitly with participants. It is recognised that returning to study for professionals, including being assessed, can involve risks as well as benefits. The course aims to create a safe yet challenging environment, from a day-long orientation session onwards. This culture is facilitated by a cohort model in which groups of 25–30 remain intact for the two part-time years of the course.

The course is delivered in a highly interactive and participatory learning mode which aligns with research on SEL that supports a highly interactive, participatory and engaging pedagogy if SEL programmes are to deliver their intended outcomes. Durlak et al. (2010) conclusions about effective SEL delivery include 'active' as one of four essential elements: sequenced, active, focused and explicit (SAFE). Stronger programme outcomes for interactive approaches, compared to didactic approaches, have been reported in related areas such as school drug education programmes (Beets et al. 2008; Tobler and Stratton 1997). The active component of SEL, and related programmes, may be seen as discretionary by teachers who lack the confidence to move away from more traditional didactic teaching approaches. Therefore, it is considered essential that course delivery models an interactive and participatory pedagogical approach.

Another arguably under-recognised aspect of teacher capacity to embed SEL in a well-sequenced, coherent programme across grades and levels in schools is the ability to collaborate with colleagues to ensure school-wide commitment and uptake (Elias et al. 2003). Prerequisites for gaining traction for wellbeing and SEL programmes include highly developed collaborative skills, the ability to engage in productive teamwork and the ability to manage conflict. Thus, learning experiences in the course are systematically designed to build participants' confidence and self-efficacy to successfully advocate for wellbeing initiatives and to collaborate with others. These skills are underpinned by a knowledge base derived from change theories and implementation science introduced in the *Leading Change for Student Wellbeing* subject.

The course concludes with a project, *Negotiated Project in Student Wellbeing*, in which participants draw upon and integrate theory, knowledge and skills developed throughout the programme (The University of Melbourne 2017). In the Australian Qualifications Framework (<http://www.aqf.edu.au/>), such integrative capstone subjects are mandated for all master's-level programmes. To complete the capstone requirement, participants develop, implement and evaluate a small-scale intervention, in collaboration with school colleagues, to address an identified need in the area of social and emotional wellbeing. Participants use an action research methodology in which cycles of planning, action, observation and critical reflection determine the direction of the project (Cohen et al. 2013). Depending on their school roles and the scope and authority they have to initiate change, the projects may begin within participants' classrooms or at a wider school level. In developing project proposals, participants are required to assess their school's culture and readiness for change to ensure plans are timely and realistic. Participants have developed a range of school policies and programmes in a variety of SEL-related areas. Some examples include: *Building Teacher Capacity in SEL through Professional Development*; *Improving Social Emotional Learning in Exploratory Playgrounds*; *Student Engagement by Incorporating Student Voice*; *Developing Self-Efficacy and a Growth Mindset in Year 7 Mathematics Students*. While many of these projects are sustained beyond the course, perhaps more importantly, they provide a rich medium for learning about change processes in schools that can be tapped in teachers' future work.

7 A University–School System Partnership to Promote Social Emotional Wellbeing

While generally postgraduate programmes, such as this one in Australia, are undertaken by individuals seeking to enhance their professional knowledge and practice, the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing) was adopted by a school system to achieve its aim of promoting social and emotional wellbeing in its schools. A collaboration between the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV)

and the University of Melbourne commenced in 1999 following the recommendations of the Victorian Suicide Prevention Task Force (1997) which encouraged educational systems to adopt a ‘system-wide approach to enhancing resiliency and wellbeing as a key component in approaches to suicide prevention’ (p. 9). When funding was offered to implement the recommendations of the Task Force, the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) response was the development of a *Youth Services Strategy*, to equip ‘Catholic school communities with the capacity to develop, implement and promote a range of prevention and early intervention strategies in student wellbeing, resiliency, mental health promotion and suicide prevention’ (CECV 1999).

Professional development for the education workforce was conceptualised as a central component of the CECV mental health promotion and suicide prevention strategy. The pre-existing postgraduate course at the University of Melbourne was identified as complementing system objectives to build teacher capacity to address the social and emotional wellbeing needs of students. The CECV purchased places in the two-year part-time postgraduate programme, the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Student Welfare), and subsequently, the successor to that course, the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing). Between 1999 and 2016, the system provided sponsored places in the programme to over 1200 staff from primary and secondary schools including classroom teachers, teachers holding leadership positions and school principals.

Over that period, the professional development strategy was articulated in system policy and strategic plans. It became an integral part of the overall strategy to support schools in the promotion of wellbeing (Catholic Education Office Melbourne 2007, 2009b, 2010a–c) and social and emotional learning in Catholic schools (Catholic Education Office Melbourne 2009a, 2009b, 2015). In 2009, the system published guidelines, *SEL in Catholic School Communities: Guidelines for a Sustainable Whole-School Approach to Social and Emotional Learning* (2009c). This resource provided guidance to schools in the phases of assessing school readiness, planning and implementing a sustainable school-wide approach to SEL.

A significant part of the wellbeing and SEL strategy was the funding of the position of Student Wellbeing Leader in primary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, with the stipulation that teachers appointed to these roles would have completed, or be in the process of completing credentialed learning under the provisions of the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing) offered through the partnership with the University of Melbourne (CEOM 2009b). The funded positions included responsibility for promoting a school-wide approach to SEL.

Given its substantial investment in professional learning in wellbeing, evaluation of the impact of the credentialed learning was of significant interest to the system. A 3 year longitudinal evaluation was undertaken funded by an Australian Research Council Strategic Partnership with Industry Research and Training (SPIRT) Grant. This research has been previously reported (Cahill et al. 2004; Freeman et al. 2003). A brief summary of the research and its findings is presented here. The evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

- How do teachers respond to sustained professional development?
- Are teacher participants more confident and competent in the promotion of student wellbeing?
- What is the impact in their schools in the short and longer term?
- What can we learn about professional development from this strategy?

Course participants completed an impact survey at the end of the course. Interviews were conducted with course participants 6–9 months after course completion with follow-up interviews at 12–18 months. To evaluate the contribution of course participation to the school, principals were surveyed at 12–18 months and some were also interviewed. The outcomes for individuals were summarised under four themes:

1. enhanced relationships;
2. confidence and empowerment;
3. enhanced leadership capacity; and
4. professional renewal and challenge.

In combination, these themes indicated that participants had increased feelings of self-efficacy about their capacity to work in and influence the social and emotional wellbeing domain in their schools.

Factors which were identified by participants as contributing to these positive outcomes were the applied and relevant nature of the course that facilitated immediate application in the school; recognition of the interplay between the personal and the professional in the course design and content; quality teaching and coherent course design and the mandate provided by course requirements and system support to engage in school change projects; system-level financial support and the development of a network of colleagues from other schools (Freeman et al. 2003). The cohort experience was perceived by participants as critical to their ability to benefit from and complete the course. Membership of an ongoing learning community was seen to provide opportunities for valuable professional interchange, including exchange of advice, resources and ideas, as well as providing personal support that helped participants to navigate their return to the role of student and the challenge of balancing work, study and personal commitments over a 2 year period.

It was evident from the SPIRT evaluation that leadership support in the school played an enabling role in the participants' ability to apply their new learning. As would be predicted from the broader educational literature on the influence of school leaders, where leadership support was perceived as absent or limited, participants reported that they were less able to use their individual learning to impact on the wider school. Participants, in these contexts, expressed frustration about not being able to fully use their newly acquired knowledge (see also Ertesvåg et al. 2010; Ransford et al. 2009).

Evidence from the SPIRT research provided the grounds for continuing collaboration between the university and the Victorian Catholic education system. More recently, the CEOM commissioned an independent evaluation to determine whether the investment in credentialed learning was having a positive impact on the

professional practice of the workforce. This review accessed employee data, course evaluation data and used an online survey of graduates from 2006 onwards and reported a range of benefits replicating the earlier SPIRT research findings (Grant Thornton Australia 2013). The review concluded that course had a positive effect on professional practice including substantial increases in participants' knowledge, skills and capabilities to contribute to policy development in schools and to promote whole-school approaches to student wellbeing and mental health. The review indicated that course was held in high esteem by graduates who would highly recommend it to other teachers due to its ability to build professional and personal capacity. From its examination of employee data, the report also noted a positive impact on career progression and workforce tenure.

The two evaluations of this professional development strategy have indicated similar positive outcomes. However, there are limitations on the conclusions that can be drawn. This approach was not being compared with other approaches to professional learning nor was the cost-effectiveness of this particular strategy assessed against other approaches. Some of the reported outcomes, such as an individual's experience of professional renewal, could be attributed to undertaking postgraduate study as a voluntary participant. It was also evident that participants' ability to influence school-wide approaches to social and emotional wellbeing in their schools is mediated by contextual factors, including the degree of leadership support available to graduates, their role in the school and the school culture. Nevertheless, sponsoring postgraduate study for a large number of teachers has supported the system's strategic objectives in identifiable ways as the following examples suggest.

The accredited programme has complemented school network meetings and professional learning offered by the Wellbeing and Community Engagement team from the sponsoring system. Given the duration of the partnership, there are now groups of graduates within many Victorian Catholic schools. System staff moving around schools have reported the emergence of shared language to discuss SEL and wellbeing which they have attributed to course participation aligned with the system strategy. The progressive development of teacher capacity in the system has aided the implementation of SEL initiatives and the uptake of other wellbeing-related initiatives, including those commenced as school-based action research projects in the course.

System sponsorship of professional development has also supported the system's agenda of promoting strong family-school partnerships to support SEL and academic learning. In 2010, CEOM focused on the role of parents in a whole-school approach to SEL recognising that the family engagement is a critical part of a whole-school community approach to the promotion of social emotional learning (CEOM 2010b). A specific course subject, *Linking School and Community*, provided the evidence base for deepening home-school partnerships and allowed teachers to evaluate levels of family engagement in their schools and recommend potential interventions.

This experience suggests that engaging in accredited study scaffolded by an educational system strategy can contribute to building teacher capacity in SEL, a

critical element in advancing the SEL agenda. The sponsorship by a system is more than the payment of an individual teacher's course costs, important as that is. It also represents for the teachers and their schools a commitment by the system to teacher learning and the system's commitment to the importance of SEL for students. The partnership has provided a strategic response to the limitations of individually focused approaches to professional development (Little 1993; Stoll et al. 2012) when a system-wide innovation is being initiated.

8 The Challenges of Partnership

Although engaging in collaborative partnerships to build teacher capacity to disseminate SEL at the system level (such as the one discussed here) can offer a route to 'scaling up' SEL (Elias et al. 2003), the process is not without challenges and it would be remiss not to mention these. Effective partnerships require the right conditions, recognition of possibilities and opportunities provided by the context. They require trust and respect for the contribution each party brings to the endeavour. In this instance, strong relationships that enabled the partnership to flourish were built over time based on shared values and commitment to promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of students. In this partnership, a course agenda and a strategic system agenda were aligned and an external opportunity, through a national suicide prevention strategy, provided the stimulus and funding. This particular partnership experience is not presented as prescription for building capacity but as an example of what is possible when committed people seize opportunities. In this case, sustaining a 16 year partnership is certainly remarkable, but the reality of partnerships for educational transformation is that changes for either partner in personnel, funding or priorities and organisational context or politics can occur quickly or unpredictably and may challenge sustainability. With systems and schools, nationally and internationally, currently under significant pressure to prioritise academic results, those committed to the value of SEL need to continue to identify new strategies to build teacher capacity in SEL across school systems.

9 Discussion

An aspect of the professional learning programme that appears to have been particularly powerful in the partnership initiative is a highly interactive pedagogy that links the personal and the professional and acknowledges the emotional dimensions of teaching and learning for participating teachers as well as their students. The role of emotions in teaching has received increasing attention (Hansen 2012; Hargreaves 2000, 2005; Leithwood and Beatty 2008; Taxer and Frenzel 2015). Hargreaves

makes a compelling case for the need to include teacher emotion in consideration of change initiatives in schools. Participant feedback over 16 years has strongly endorsed the value of the strong integration of cognitive, emotional and relational elements in course delivery. Striking parallels can be seen in the impact on incumbent and aspiring school leaders in an Australian master's-level leadership programme which prioritised 'emotional ways of knowing' (Beatty 2007, 2011). While jointly these findings are of relevance to the effective delivery of postgraduate programmes, they are particularly salient to teachers learning about social and emotional wellbeing.

Of relevance to teacher emotions, Patricia Jennings and Mark Greenberg's model of teacher prosocial behaviour posits a feedback loop between teacher SEC and students' academic and SEL outcomes (Jennings and Greenberg 2009). The model suggests that socially and emotionally competent teachers are not only able to create safe, caring cultures that engage students and lead to positive learning outcomes, but these positive student responses serve to enhance teachers' own SEC and wellbeing. In this model, the relationship between staff and student emotional and social competence and wellbeing is bidirectional. An example of this reciprocal model in action is provided in a small mixed method Australian case study of a teacher implementing an Australian SEL programme, *The Best of Coping* (Frydenberg and Brandon 2007a, b), with adolescents. The teacher described how she became a fellow learner with students as teaching the programme led her to reflect on her own social and emotional skills. Analysing her own journaled observations and student feedback, the teacher identified that her relationships with her students strengthened and that they were also more willing to seek help from her. She attributed positive programme outcomes partly to sharing with her students real examples of her own learning about managing emotions (Huxley et al. 2007).

The enhancement of teachers' SEC could serve a protective function for teachers. SEC teachers are less likely to experience burnout because they have the skills and dispositions to work more effectively with students, including challenging students (Hue and Lau 2015). The findings on the university-system partnership presented above include teacher perceptions of a sense of renewal from engagement in the course and provide promising data from the system on the possible impact of this on career progression and tenure.

It has not been the intention here to draw a conclusion based on the university-system partnership about the 'best' model of professional learning to develop teacher capacity. We concur with others that continuing research is required to establish what works, for whom and in what conditions, and how training interacts with other implementation variables (Jennings and Frank 2015; Reyes et al. 2012). A range of models, including the system-university partnership model, has been discussed, and it is worth, albeit briefly, noting other forms of professional learning, such as core team models, in-house collaborative professional learning and blended learning that could contribute to enhancing teacher capacity to implement SEL.

10 Emerging Possibilities

Future directions could include greater consideration of developing models that deepen ownership of SEL initiatives in schools. With increasing use of the term ‘professional learning’ rather than ‘professional development’, the use of locally owned systematic approaches to professional learning has been increasingly advocated as a powerful medium for sustained professional learning (e.g., Stoll et al. 2012; Timperley et al. 2008). This educational literature can provide another lens on developing teacher capacity for SEL implementation.

Recent Australian research on the *Enhancing Relationships in School Communities* project has demonstrated the value of a *core team model* of ongoing professional learning in which teams of teachers including a school leader undertake professional learning on cooperative conflict resolution processes over 18 months (Freeman et al. 2014; White et al. 2013). Based on this model of professional learning, core teams contributed to whole-school approaches to conflict resolution through policy development, supporting and sharing their learning with other staff, embedding conflict resolution in the curriculum and engaging parents in new approaches.

Locally owned professional learning can deepen knowledge and skills through staff collaboration, enquiry and action research (Askell-Williams and Murray-Harvey 2015; Stoll et al. 2006) potentially complementing the use of external SEL expertise. The Quality Teaching Rounds model is an interesting form of this in-house approach which has been implemented in NSW schools and is now being investigated in a large randomised control trial (Gore et al. 2015). The process brings 4–8 teachers together in ‘highly focused professional learning communities’ in which all participants undertake professional reading and each participant teaches a lesson and is observed by peers using the Quality Teaching Model coding observation protocol. Structured professional conversations in which feedback is provided by peers follow. This model may offer another teacher capacity building strategy for SEL.

Research by Collie et al. (2015) has implications for SEL professional learning in particular schools. Using person–environment fit theory, the researchers were able to distinguish three teacher SEL profiles: thrivers, advocates and strivers, who could be differentiated on the dimension of level of comfort for SEL and perceived school support for SEL. Their findings suggested that SEL advocates, who had a high level of comfort with SEL but perceived a low level of school level support, were more likely to report greater stress and less job satisfaction. These findings echo other research suggesting that school factors interact with teacher capacity and impact on whether positive outcomes for teachers and students are achieved (e.g., Reyes et al. 2012). One implication is that SEL professional learning needs to be tailored to the school context with the aim of fostering school-wide ownership among staff.

A further emerging possibility for SEL professional learning that could provide for ‘scaling up’ (Elias et al. 2003) is blended learning which integrates face-to-face and online learning. An initial evaluation of the use of an online portal in the

KidsMatter national mental health promotion initiative indicated that teachers found the combination of face-to-face and online learning more helpful than conventional face-to-face delivery by a facilitator (Dix and Van Velsen 2014). The flexibility, the scheduling, sequencing, the opportunity to access additional materials, to tailor the material to the local context and to revisit materials were positive aspects of the blended learning noted by teachers. A qualification to this finding was that schools in diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities indicated that more face-to-face learning would still need to be maintained. The universal delivery of SEL is likely to require a range of professional learning options, and technological advances may provide one part of the solution to building teacher capacity.

11 Conclusion

The discussion above indicates the variety of professional forms of learning that have been developed to build teacher capacity to deliver SEL. It is a complex picture encompassing specific SEL programme-related training, training focusing on teacher social and emotional competence and formal pre-service and postgraduate education. The necessity for professional learning in SEL discussed in this chapter can be given additional legitimacy if it is underpinned not only by educational policy but by teacher certification requirements. When teacher capacity to deliver SEL is embedded explicitly in professional standards, greater priority and resources are more likely to be allocated (Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015). For example, the new Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2015) *Guidelines for Professional Standards for Teachers* includes under the *Teaching All Students Standard 2*, ‘2e Social and Emotional Learning Indicator: Employs a variety of strategies to assist students to develop social emotional-competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making’ (p. 12).

In a commentary on the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers), Kriewaldt (2015) has advocated that greater weight be given to learner perspectives on what constitutes good teaching. Relational elements figured strongly in student feedback in her research. She concludes that ‘attending to and articulating the affective, relational dimensions of teaching that an enriched account of teaching standards could be established to foster student wellbeing and achievement’ (p. 84). If national teaching standards prioritise the relational and social emotional dimensions of teaching, this could provide a compelling case for including SEL and SEC in Australian pre-service teacher education, where building teacher capacity to implement SEL starts.

In the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, a promising development has been the delivery in the pre-service teaching degree of an elective, *Promoting Student Wellbeing*, based on the experience of the master’s programme discussed in this chapter. The subject includes SEL and SEC content (Cahill et al. 2016).

The uptake of this elective by teacher candidates has been strong, and a proposal to offer a further elective, *Teacher Wellbeing and Resilience*, is currently underway. It is also encouraging to see recent Australian research investigating initiatives in teacher education to build resilience, including social emotional competence (Johnson et al. 2014, 2015; Mansfield et al. 2016). These local developments are embryonic, but nevertheless positive, signs that the social and emotional wellbeing and learning of both teachers and students is becoming an important focus in the Australian educational landscape.

Acknowledgements The contributions of many groups and individuals to the university–system partnership are recognised here. The foresight in initiating and supporting the partnership of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV), including the Directors of Catholic Education from the Archdioceses of Melbourne, Sale, Ballarat and Bendigo, and managers and members of the Wellbeing and Community Engagement team in the Catholic Education Melbourne, is acknowledged. The partnership flourished with the backing and active support of respective Deans of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and Professional staff. Finally, the commitment of many academic staff, past and present, who have developed and taught in the programme must be recorded. The authors are Coordinators of the Master of Education (Student Wellbeing).

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From Evidence to Practice: Preparing Teachers for Wellbeing

Gavin Hazel

Abstract Since 2000 the Australian government has actively supported, initial teacher training and in-service preparation of, teachers to contribute through their day-to-day practice to the social and emotional wellbeing and learning of children and young people. Response Ability is the pre-service component of this activity, and its purpose is to support tertiary education institutions in their training of education and care professionals. Its scope encompasses early childhood, primary, and secondary teacher training in university and vocational education. Response Ability aims to enable tertiary educators (e.g. lecturers, tutors, and course coordinators) to raise awareness and build the capacity of the future teaching workforce. Response Ability is designed to firstly empower teacher educators and students; secondly to build capacity in their professional capabilities; and finally to transform the behaviour and culture of the university profession so that the inclusion of social and emotional wellbeing in education and care becomes a regular feature of professional teacher preparation. This chapter will examine the approach taken by Response Ability (www.responseability.org) and will look at the key lessons learnt from the development of this intervention and consider how teacher education programmes in Australia, and internationally, could most effectively integrate issues relating to young people's wellbeing, personal development, and social and emotional learning into initial teacher education.

Keywords Wellbeing · Teacher education · Mental health · Promotion and prevention

Social and emotional wellbeing and learning has emerged as a strong focus within the national and international educational arena in recent years (Durlak and Weissberg 2010; Durlak et al. 2011; Humphrey 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015). There is a growing international movement that supports the integration of social and emotional wellbeing and related concepts into the core work of schools and

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E. Frydenberg, A.J. Martin and R.J. Collie (eds.), *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3394-0_23

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teachers, such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) initiative in the UK and the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in the USA. Teachers need to be equipped with skills, resources, and processes to be effective in systematically integrating social and emotional learning into their practice (Harrison et al. 2008; Hazel 2014; Hunter Institute of Mental Health and Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council 2012; Jennings and Greeneberg 2009; Schonert-Reichl and Zakrewski 2014; Shonert-Reichl et al. 2015). This chapter will examine the approach taken by Response Ability (www.responseability.org), a distinctive, custom-designed, and evidence-based initiative for influencing the pre-service preparation of all Australian teachers. This chapter will look at the key lessons learnt from the development of this intervention and consider how teacher education programmes in Australia, and internationally, could most effectively integrate issues relating to young people's wellbeing, personal development, and social and emotional learning into initial teacher education.

1 Current Context: Converging Agendas of Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Learning

In Australia, many state and territory educational organisations are implementing policies and frameworks that relate to social and emotional wellbeing and are providing support to schools to become involved in whole-school wellbeing promotion (e.g. NSW Department of Education and Communities 2015). A brief review of systems' policies conducted over a decade ago (Griffiths and Cooper 2005) identified that social and emotional wellbeing was emerging as an important theme in schooling. More recently, a national scoping study reviewed the activities and frameworks of jurisdictions throughout Australia and recommended a national student wellbeing framework for Australia (ACU National and Erebus International 2008). Research suggests that the most effective school-based strategies are founded on comprehensive whole-school approaches in which promoting social and emotional wellbeing becomes a sustained and integrated process in the school and part of the core business of the whole-school community (ACU National and Erebus International 2008; Durlak and DuPre 2008; Durlak et al. 2011; Graetz et al. 2008; Greenberg et al. 2005; Greenberg et al. 2003; Han and Weiss 2005; Hunter Institute of Mental Health and Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council 2012; Kutcher and Wei 2012; Weist and Murry 2008; Wells et al. 2003).

Clearly, the wealth of international and national work being undertaken in regard to students' social and emotional wellbeing and learning in educational settings shows its potential to support positive outcomes for children and young people and supports the likelihood that it will continue to be a cornerstone of education and care practice for many years to come (Bridgeland et al. 2013; Durlak et al. 2015; Graetz et al. 2008; Hawkins et al. 2008; Ransford et al. 2009; Roffey 2016; Weissberg et al. 2015; Weston et al. 2008). The literature and Australian policy and

practice suggest that the promotion of social and emotional wellbeing and learning, as well as a focus on early intervention and prevention, will increasingly be adopted as a core activity for schools and teachers.

A key implication of this is that all teachers, ranging from new graduates through to more experienced practitioners, will need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of social and emotional wellbeing and its implications for professional practice (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning 2003, 2012; Durlak et al. 2011; Hazel 2014; Hunter Institute of Mental Health and Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council 2012; Ikesako and Miyamoto 2015; Macklem 2014; Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015; Sheppard et al. 2015; Weston et al. 2008; Zins et al. 2004). Although professional teacher standards, expert opinion, and research indicate that an understanding of wellbeing and the social and emotional dimensions of learning are indispensable to the role of all teachers, there are varying levels of adoption in initial teacher education, to date, across the Australian tertiary sector. Recently, pockets of excellence and progress have emerged but the need remains for significant transformation to be undertaken across the initial teacher education sector as a whole.

To bring about sustained change in a profession requires the adoption of a new way of carrying out previous activities (Davis et al. 2012; Hazel 2012; Vincent et al. 2005). Importantly, this often requires the revision of beliefs, knowledge, and skills. This process is a complex one, and there are significant inhibitors to change at the personal, group, cultural, and system levels (Sheppard et al. 2015). Scaffolding and building capability of teacher educators are two important enablers in these circumstances (Hazel 2015; Hunter Institute of Mental Health 2010). To do this, we need to further deepen our understanding of social and emotional learning and we must also continue to translate this understanding into the ways in which we prepare prospective teachers (Clarke et al. 2015; Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning 2003; Durlak et al. 2011; Franklin et al. 2012; Graetz et al. 2008; Hunter Institute of Mental Health 2014; Hunter Institute of Mental Health and Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council 2012; Rowe et al. 2007; Weston et al. 2008; Zins et al. 2007).

2 Social and Emotional Wellbeing: Finding a Place in Teacher Education

One of the fundamental questions in the development of a university-based initial teacher education programme is: which elements should be addressed in pre-service or initial education and which would be better covered in later professional development? This is particularly an issue in practical and service-oriented professions, many of which have seen a shift from predominantly workplace-based models of professional preparation to university-awarded qualifications and professional placements, practicums, and internships. In many such professions, there

are still tensions about what can and should be learned at a university or college and what must be absorbed “on the job” or through formal professional development activities (Billett 2009; Deed et al. 2011; Hammerness 2006; Ingvarson et al. 2014).

Difficulties arise for professions when knowledge or skills that are fundamental to current professional practice are devalued by being marginalised or omitted from pre-service programmes. This can lead to graduates being poorly prepared for, or becoming disenchanted with, some aspects of their roles once they enter the workforce. The solution to balancing a multitude of pressures and priorities within a constrained initial teacher education programme is often to try to touch on “a little of everything” in the limited time available. While this is an understandable response to the circumstances, it becomes important to be strategic about the key messages emphasised in each selected area. It is also critical to introduce topics in such a way that their importance is understood and graduates are able to integrate them in a meaningful way into their beginning practice, while building on them further through workplace experience and professional development (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 2005; Ingvarson et al. 2014).

The organisation of teacher education programmes in the Australian tertiary education sector is shaped by a broad range of factors (Aspland 2006; Ingvarson et al. 2014; Norton and Cherastidtham 2014) including: professional standards; accrediting and employment requirements; research and best practice; educational policy and curriculum; and the professional interests and strengths of the faculty or school, programme planners, and individual lecturers. These factors affect the relative emphasis that is placed upon different content areas. These decisions are also bound within the technical requirements of degree regulations, length of programme, modes of delivery, quality assurance practices, and funding mechanisms. In seeking to influence university teacher preparation, awareness of this context is critical to understanding what is both possible and practical.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2015) has reported that in 2013, there were 406 accredited initial teacher education programmes being offered by 48 providers across a range of locations in Australia. There are a number of different ways in which a prospective teacher can complete the required qualifications for teacher registration. The basic requirement is a four-year or longer higher education qualification. Typically students complete either a 3 year undergraduate degree and graduate entry professional qualification, or an integrated qualification or a combined degree. Many institutions offer a mix of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership 2015; Ingvarson et al. 2014). Initial teacher education programmes are offered in a range of delivery modes including: on campus, online, external, and multimodal.

That social and emotional wellbeing and learning needs to be addressed as a priority is increasingly accepted; yet, the best way to do this on a day-to-day basis in teacher training, understandably, remains an open question. In essence, the key operational questions for initial teacher education are: How can we best prepare graduates to contribute to the complementary outcomes of learning and wellbeing?

And how do we blend knowledge about wellbeing with the other professional knowledge that makes up initial teacher education?

It is proposed that graduates need to be cognisant of two key messages in regard to social and emotional wellbeing (Hunter Institute of Mental Health 2010, 2014; Hunter Institute of Mental Health and Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council 2012; Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007; Stafford 2007; Stafford et al. 2007; Response Ability 2007a, 2010, 2011) and should be provided with some fundamental skills to help them feel confident in these domains. (1) Young people's social and emotional wellbeing has an impact upon their learning, behaviour, and success at school; teachers and schools can create environments that promote the social and emotional wellbeing and learning of young people. (2) Teachers have a duty of care towards any young person who is at risk of harm as a result of social or emotional difficulties; this requires the capacity to recognise troubled young people and refer them to appropriate support agencies (Hunter Institute of Mental Health 2010; Response Ability 2007a, b, 2010, 2014a, 2015).

Social and emotional wellbeing and learning can be effectively conceptualised in initial teacher education as a cross-disciplinary issue, not belonging exclusively to any particular domain or learning area (Hazel and Vincent 2005; Hunter Institute of Mental Health 2014; Schonert-Reichl et al. 2015; Stafford et al. 2007; Weston et al. 2008). In this sense, it is akin to other foundational principles of education, such as teaching for inclusion, diversity, and equity. Ideally such principles are taught explicitly to all pre-service teachers at some point in a given programme, but can also be reinforced in connection with other topic areas and related to students' personal and practical experiences. Response Ability advocates that a comprehensive integration of social and emotional wellbeing into initial teacher education programmes (Foggett et al. 2007; Hazel and Vincent 2005; Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007; Response Ability 2001, 2007a, 2010, 2011; Stafford 2007; Stafford et al. 2007; Vincent et al. 2005; Weatherby-Fell and Vincent 2005; Weatherby-Fell and Kean 2004) would be comprised of the following components being provided throughout a programme:

- Exploring the two key principles suggested above in early foundation units to be taken by all pre-service teachers in the programme, while providing them with supporting and extension materials that they can retain for further reference.
- Providing a more detailed exploration of social and emotional wellbeing and learning in a unit and/or in an elective unit.
- Taking the opportunity to reinforce the importance of this issue by integrating a consideration of social and emotional wellbeing when discussing other relevant topics such as: learning, diversity/inclusion, behaviour management, and professional responsibilities.
- Integrating considerations of young people's social and emotional wellbeing as part of professional experience or practicum components—either by setting relevant tasks while in the school setting (such as reviewing policies and partnerships) or discussing relevant issues in follow-up tutorials or seminars.

- Modelling pedagogic practices and assessment that explicitly acknowledge social and emotional dimensions of learning (i.e., “two-way pedagogies”, “supportive learning environments”, and “assessment of affective characteristics”).
- Planning using a curriculum alignment approach to ensure a consistent and cohesive framework between goals, approaches, and assessments.

Such comprehensive integration aims to ensure that all graduates have some appreciation of the interrelationship between wellbeing and education, and the implications for the teacher’s role (Response Ability 2007a, 2010; Stafford et al. 2007). Consistent with the principles of curriculum integration, such an approach is likely to be more effective in shaping graduates’ beliefs and practice than a brief, isolated exposure. The challenge is how do you achieve this across the tertiary education sector as a whole?

3 Response Ability: A Case Study

Since 2000 the Australian government has actively supported, initial teacher training and in-service preparation of, teachers to contribute through their day-to-day practice to the social and emotional wellbeing and learning of children and young people. Response Ability is the pre-service component of this activity, and its purpose is to support tertiary education institutions in their training of education and care professionals. Its scope encompasses early childhood, primary, and secondary teacher training in university and vocational education. Response Ability aims to enable tertiary educators (e.g. lecturers, tutors, and course coordinators) to raise awareness and build the capacity of the future teaching workforce.

In the late 1990s as part of the initial consultation, scoping, and piloting undertaken for the Response Ability project, substantial differences were identified between the contexts of school-based in-service professional development and the initial teacher education with prospective teachers. The development of a tailored approach that was sensitive to the practical nuances of the tertiary education system, the nature of prospective student’s knowledge and skills, and the variety of instructional modalities and content would be critical for successful dissemination, adoption, and maintenance of the programme. Response Ability has typically worked closely during resource development and implementation phases with its peer programmes within the mental health and schooling space, *MindMatters*, *KidsMatter*, and *Kids Matter Early Childhood*. It has also increased its coverage of key issues through collaborative work with other government initiatives and peak bodies such as beyondblue: the national depression initiative; Children of Parents with a Mental Illness; the Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network; Australian Psychological Society; Principals Australia Institute; Early Childhood Australia; The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care; SANE Australia; Wellbeing Australia; headspace; and ReachOut.

Since the launch of Response Ability's first resource in 2001 (complementing the national in-service resource MindMatters commissioned by the government during the same period), the challenge of being "fit for purpose" and responsive to developments within the tertiary education context has remained constant with substantial reforms occurring both in schools, systems, and teacher accreditation, and in the tertiary education sector, in particular in teacher education. For example, the landscape of initial teacher training in Australia is currently undergoing some of the biggest regulatory and structural changes in its history (Aspland 2006; Ingvarson et al. 2014). The uncapping of the number of initial teacher enrolments, the introduction of national systems of accreditation, and development of a national school curriculum are anticipated to lead to significant changes in teacher education courses. This is combined with an expanding role for public health initiatives in the educational setting, the emergence of major national health promotion, prevention and early intervention mental health initiatives, and significant technological and communication advances. In short, the instructional, practical, and policy environment for schoolteachers, and those who train them, are providing both significant opportunities for innovation as well as substantive practical challenges.

Concordantly, as a domain of intervention Australian initial teacher education is a structured but dynamic environment reflecting a spectrum of approaches, students, educators, programmes, and levels of study (Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007). The content of initial teacher education programmes is typically organised around the thematic areas of professional experiences, curriculum and pedagogic studies, and foundational studies, but there is a significant degree of institutional autonomy on how these themes are represented in specific programmes. While the national accreditation process is refining this situation, there continues to be distinctive and practical differences between institutions' approaches to preparing prospective teachers.

In responding to these circumstances, Response Ability project (www.responseability.org) has used four key pillars in its approach to influencing teacher education:

- Provision of evidence-based and sector appropriate co-created resources and professional support;
- Consultation, collaboration, and workforce capacity building;
- Advocacy of changes to curriculum, competencies, policies, procedures, and codes of professional practice; and
- National leadership in policy, research, and practice.

In essence, Response Ability provides a framework for communicating critical wellbeing, and social and emotional wellbeing learning principles, knowledge, and skills to the teacher education sector (Hazel 2012; Response Ability 2001, 2007a, 2010). By targeting a common core of capacities that are essential to mental health and wellbeing, Response Ability is designed to firstly empower teacher educators and their students; secondly to build capacity in initial teacher educators and their students professional capabilities; and finally to transform the behaviour and culture

of initial teacher education programmes so that the inclusion of social and emotional wellbeing in education becomes a regular feature of teacher preparation (Kemp and Hazel 2013).

The Response Ability resources are based on the principles of co-creation and evidence-informed practice and employ the design values of being:

1. **Multidimensional:** Allowing for sequential or simultaneous implementation, use in both core or elective subjects, and applicable to both generic and applied context;
2. **Multimodal:** Allow for use in direction instruction, guided/supported learning, rehearsal, problem-solving, or experiential learning; and
3. **Flexible:** Explicitly allows for educator autonomy in the choice/design of implementation, sequencing, and focus.

Using these principles, Response Ability has produced four custom-designed multimedia resources covering the promotion of social and emotional wellbeing and learning from birth to 18 years and nationally disseminated these resources to all universities, technical and further education institutions (TAFE), and the majority of private registered training organisations (RTO). In overview, the core Response Ability resources consist of the following components:

- Short films made in authentic early childhood and school settings in Australia;
- Interviews with experienced early education and care educators and school teachers;
- Genuine interactions with children and families;
- Realistic case study scenarios for students to examine;
- Over 300 practical student activities linked to the early education and care competencies and teaching practices;
- Notes for facilitators accompanying all student activities;
- Practical advice on promoting mental health and supporting early intervention; and
- Student handouts on key issues.

Response Ability intentionally uses a mix of multimedia stimulus and support materials to evoke problem-solving scenarios and encourage critical thinking, reflection, and problem-solving (Cavanagh et al. 2014; Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007; Response Ability 2007a, 2010). This is an approach that allows for both rehearsal and debriefing around a range of situations, issues, and concerns that are germane to social and emotional development, education, and care. It provides prospective teachers with both knowledge and experience which can then be applied to their practicums and ongoing work within schools. Through its unique position in the initial teacher education environment, Response Ability creates a first point of contact for prospective teachers and educators with social and emotional wellbeing and in doing so lays the foundation for national in-service programmes, *KidsMatter Early Childhood*, *Kids Matter*, and *MindMatters* mental health promotion initiatives, they will encounter in schools and early childhood and care services.

The underlying logic model of this approach (Response Ability 2011) is that by increasing the capability of educators to engage with social emotional wellbeing and learning, we can make progress on some of the intractable challenges that face child and youth wellbeing. One of the fundamental assumptions of Response Ability is that appropriately equipped teachers can actively contribute to strengthening children and families (Response Ability 2007a, b). By implementing common concepts and approaches across child and youth professionals Response Ability seeks to develop a deeper understanding of the direct contribution that teachers, schools, and learning make to social and emotional wellbeing and learning. Response Ability develops not just specific job-related skills, like observing student behaviour, but training to develop a new way of thinking about education from the perspective of social and emotional wellbeing (Hazel 2012).

4 The CHILD Framework: An Overview

There are many variables within the dynamic context of the classroom, but teachers can be prepared to work with their attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, knowledge, and communication. A key component of this is a firm appreciation of the social and emotional dimensions of learning and schooling. To develop teachers competent in the domain of social and emotional wellbeing, mental health, and learning requires knowledge, experience, and resources to support practice. An effective method for building capability is to provide prospective teachers with tools that assist them in figuring out what is important as opposed to just “nice to know”. With this in mind, Response Ability developed a range of translation tools, guidelines, and extension materials for supporting teaching practice and decision-making across the spectrum of education and care settings, curriculum areas, and teaching qualifications (Fig. 1).

The CHILD framework (Hunter Institute of Mental Health 2010; Response Ability 2007a, 2010, 2014b) provides practical guidance for supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing in the context of teachers’ work (Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007). It has two applications in initial teacher education. Firstly, CHILD summarises the practical strategies that teachers can use to support children and young peoples’ optimal social and emotional development, wellbeing and learning. Secondly, it provides both a scaffold to support lecturers’ examination of social and emotional learning and a method through which they can inspect their own discipline/content areas to identify where social and emotional wellbeing is either part of their existing curriculum design or alternatively where there may be opportunities to strengthen this element. Underlying the CHILD framework (Hunter Institute of Mental Health 2010; Response Ability 2007a, 2010) is a set of basic assumptions:

- Children have a strong sense of identity;
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world;
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing;



Fig. 1 CHILD framework (Response Ability 2007a, 2014b)

- Children are confident and involved learners; and
- Children are effective communicators.

CHILD aligns with the key principles of mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention, as they apply to people who work with children. By synthesising a range of research and theory in the areas of mental health promotion, education, positive psychology, public health, development, and mental health, the CHILD framework is designed to complement and not replace existing resources, programmes, and frameworks. CHILD imparts a heuristic for individual teachers that they can apply immediately to their practice in whatever role, situation, or type of position they find themselves in. It also forms a bridge to connect with the national ongoing professional development and in school programmes of *KidsMatter Early Childhood*, *KidsMatter*, and *MindMatters*. To understand how it works, we will briefly describe the focus of each of the five component areas (see www.responseability.org).

4.1 Component 1: Create Caring, Safe, and Supportive Environments for Optimal Learning, Development, and Wellbeing

Teachers and schools can foster a supportive environment by using a range of strategies: modelling caring relationships and good communication with everyone;

setting clear guidelines for behaviour; using child-centred teaching approaches that cater for different temperaments and learning styles; acknowledging each person's strengths and interests; and providing constructive but caring guidance when needed.

However, what contributes to feeling safe and secure may be different for each child and family, and prospective teachers will need to be aware of the diversity of children and families they are working with. Fostering a sense of belonging, connectedness, and inclusion for all children and families is also an important aspect of creating a positive environment. Cultural diversity and other forms of family diversity need to be accommodated, including awareness that different cultures may be associated with different values and beliefs about raising children and education.

The way that teachers respond to the needs of children, and the way they communicate with children both verbally and non-verbally, can be important factors influencing the quality of relationships between child and teacher. Positive, effective partnerships with families are also essential, as part of creating a safe and supportive environment that supports children's wellbeing and development.

4.2 Component 2: Help Children and Young People to Learn Social and Emotional Skills and Manage Their Own Behaviour

Research suggests that the development of positive social and emotional skills is fundamental to children's mental health and wellbeing. Social and emotional skills are important for children's learning, moral development, motivation to achieve, and interpersonal relationships. They also help children to learn to manage their own feelings, behaviour, and attention and to begin to develop a positive sense of self and a positive impression of the world in which they live.

Teachers can assist in the development of positive mental health and wellbeing by helping children to develop social and emotional skills. Key social and emotional skills or attributes include:

- Effective and socially appropriate communication skills;
- Understanding and managing emotions including their physical effects;
- Empathy, sharing, and helping others;
- Respect for diversity;
- Relating to others in positive ways;
- Fair and equitable social behaviour such as turn taking;
- Conflict resolution and problem-solving;
- Understanding how actions and speech affect others;
- Developing consideration for others;
- A sense of autonomy, balanced with inter-dependence;
- The capacity to ask for help; and
- Being able to participate in group activities.

These factors are important because they influence an individual's capacity to build relationships, communicate their needs, and understand and respond to the needs of others. As they mature, children will build on these foundations to develop more advanced social, emotional, and psychological capacities and characteristics.

4.3 Component 3: Identify Children, Young People, and Families Who May Be in Need of Additional Support

Children or families may need extra support when social or emotional difficulties arise. Teachers are skilled in observing children and are often able to pick up early signs of difficulties. Examples could include: not achieving developmental milestones; marked shyness or anxiety in children; challenging behaviour; family difficulties; and violence or abuse. Early identification of such problems can improve personal and educational outcomes for children.

4.4 Component 4: Link Children, Young People, and Families with Information and Support Services

Families often seek advice from teachers about children's development, behaviour, learning, and wellbeing. Sometimes referral to another agency, service, or professional is warranted, to assess the situation or help a family obtain treatment and support. Teachers need a working knowledge of local services so they can form effective partnerships with parents, to promote good learning and developmental outcomes for children.

4.5 Component 5: Develop Broader Organisational, School, and Community Strategies that Promote Wellbeing and Social and Emotional Learning

Teachers also contribute to broader wellbeing strategies through: developing partnerships with the community; increasing parent participation in children's education; developing policies or procedures; and advocating for the needs of children in the community. To manage these complex roles, teachers also need to engage in reflective practice, have access to professional development, and look after their own wellbeing.

The instructional resources constructed around the CHILD framework (cf. Hunter Institute of Mental Health 2010; Response Ability 2007a, 2010) are intended to provide lecturers with multiple points of access and connection for

initial teacher education programmes to the concepts of social and emotional wellbeing regardless of type of programme, level of qualification, curriculum orientation, or instructional mode. They translate the broad evidence base around social and emotional wellbeing into discrete but complementary domains of professional practice (Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007). These domains can then be used to locate opportunities within existing initial teacher education courses to include these principles and practices as part of the preparation of teachers.

5 Putting It into Practice: What Have We Learnt?

The dissemination, uptake, adoption, and maintenance of innovations in highly regulated professional qualifications are difficult. There have been significant structural, operational, and conceptual challenges for Response Ability. There has also been a growth in the research behind social and emotional learning and a deepening of our practical understanding what is required for effective implementation.

The long-term adoption of the Response Ability initiative has relied upon tertiary education making social and emotional wellbeing principles and practices part of their regular preparation of teachers (Stafford et al. 2007). Response Ability has worked in partnership with tertiary educators with the aim of building organisational and individual capacity for this integration (Kemp and Hazel 2013). What we have learnt in working towards this goal is that:

5.1 Social and Emotional Wellbeing and Learning Can Be Challenging to Teach

Teaching and learning of mental health and wellbeing material is demanding. Lecturers and students value the opportunity to work on this material, but they need practical ways to do so that respond to the constraints of time, levels of organisational buy-in, differing levels of enthusiasm for “up skilling” in this area of teacher education (mainly at the level of lecturers), and differing programmes, opportunities, and student cohorts.

5.2 Providing Content Is not Enough

When Response Ability was initially conceptualised, the most significant practical barrier identified by university lecturers to embedding of mental health, social and

emotional wellbeing, and learning into initial teacher education programmes was that they did not know how to teach the content, either in terms of instructional resources or in terms of confidence in the subject matter (Allen and Vincent 2005). The proposed solution to this situation was to translate research into the content that could be adapted by lecturers for their particular needs.

As a result, what was addressed in the development of the initial resources was the issue of building confidence, competence, and providing significant scaffolding to the lecturer's teaching practice. This was done by translating the core messages and information related to social and emotional wellbeing into the language, processes, and formats germane to initial teacher education (e.g. prepared lectures, tutorial activities, fact sheets, assessment tasks, guided readings, and multimedia stimulus materials). This was done with the intent of removing technical (i.e. how would I teach this?) and conceptual barriers (i.e. what do I need to know?) barriers to usage. Interestingly, after many years of experience engaging with the sector, it is clear that "not knowing how to teach mental health and wellbeing or not having a resource to use in teaching this" was in practice only one barrier among many complicated and interacting factors.

5.3 There Is Critical Difference Between Being Supportive in Principle and Taking Action

In the consultations, evaluations, and working with the tertiary sector, there has been a consistent message that some teacher educators, even with support, do not feel comfortable teaching mental health and wellbeing content. Although the exact reasons for this attitude are not always clear, there is a discrepancy between what in principle educators may regard as important, valuable, and necessary (i.e. teaching graduates knowledge about social and emotional wellbeing) and what they are comfortable, willing, and prepared to teach. This dichotomy at the level of individual educators, and within the sector as a whole, presents an ongoing challenge for the inclusion of more universal social and emotional wellbeing approaches in tertiary education settings. Key enablers of adoption of innovation are attenuated in the flatter organisational structures of the university context. In the absence of structural, social, behavioural, and professional drivers of uptake and adoption (e.g. call to action, response to risk, compliance requirements, perceived benefit and ownership, change agents), then the weak connections in the social networks of academic staff impeded the growth of collective ownership and implementation. In this context, capability interventions need to consider how to incorporate both top-down and bottom-up adoption of initiatives, as well as cultural and structural barriers to change.

5.4 Cross-Disciplinary Change Is Challenging—It Needs a Common Ground

The culture of tertiary education, embodied in the organisational structure and the processes to recruit staff to teaching and research positions, seeks out and encourages, to a degree, specialisation in discrete areas. Response Ability brings by design multidisciplinary knowledge and requires lecturers to value information that is being drawn from the knowledge domains in which they may have limited professional interest. Initially, those educators who are most closely aligned to health, psychology, or child development parent disciplines were typically the most sympathetic or open to inclusion of wellbeing.

This has been both a strength and barrier. It means that there have been a cohort of academics who are willing to create a point of access into initial teacher education programmes, but this has also meant that other academic cohorts saw this area as being owned by particular staff or specialisations as opposed to something that has universal relevance and application to all prospective teachers. This circumstance has introduced the need to break down assumptions about area, as well as the potential stigma around mental health, before progress can be made with late adopters of the project. The combination of iterative co-designed resources and support, alongside of significant changes in public and professional perception and understanding of social and emotional wellbeing in education, has allowed progress, but this remains an ongoing challenge.

5.5 Educators Can Learn About and Champion Mental Health and Wellbeing

Even considering the practical, conceptual, and cultural challenges in fostering professional learning for tertiary staff and ensuring dissemination occurred independently of direct on-site input from project staff, Response Ability has demonstrated that this approach can bring about change (Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007; Stafford et al. 2007). Where Response Ability has been taken up in a deep and well-thought-out way, it has led to important impacts on university course curriculum, lecturer practice, and student sense of confidence and competence in regard to mental health and wellbeing (Allen and Vincent 2005; Cavanagh et al. 2014; Foggett et al. 2007; Kay-Lambkin et al. 2007; Weatherby-Fell and Vincent 2005; Weatherby-Fell and Kean 2004). The implementation of the Response Ability has corroborated the original logic model and the decision made to bring lecturers actively into the process of delivering the content rather than providing a discrete, static, and closed resource that was simply distributed. Moreover, lecturers have made use of the flexibility and adaptability of the resource to find a wide range of locations within their teaching programmes.

5.6 *Graduates not Experts—Working Towards Mastery*

There is an implicit understanding in the teaching standards and competencies that teacher education programmes do not produce experts who have mastered all domains of their professional skill set. Graduates need experience to mature in their capabilities and progress towards mastery. Response Ability initiates the professional learning and development required by prospective teachers, but this learning and development needs to continue through workplace professional development and reflection. The goal of programme is to build capability and confidence as foundation for mastery.

6 Conclusion

There is sufficient research, policy, professional, and public support for the proposition that social and emotional wellbeing and learning is central to the work of teachers that there remains no question of whether student wellbeing should be a key element of the role of the teaching profession. The only remaining questions are about how best to represent and support this key element of professional practice, through elements such as professional standards, initial training, teacher registration, and ongoing professional learning. The answers to these questions will require more than the translation of multidisciplinary knowledge about social and emotional wellbeing into the context of schooling. We will need to continue to consider innovative ways in which we can support professional learning at every stage of a teacher's career—from initial training onwards. To do this involves an appreciation of the opportunities and limitations of the contexts in which teachers are prepared for their profession and learn in the workplace. Effective and integrated inclusion of social and emotional wellbeing and learning in initial teacher training is a critical component in supporting teachers to understand how they can expand the learning experiences of all students; encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods to support social and emotional learning, wellbeing, and engagement; and to develop whole of school planning and accountability for wellbeing. One promising pathway to realising this goal is sector-wide capability development interventions, like Response Ability, *MindMatters*, and *Kids Matter*, which focus on promoting and fostering core professional competences and skills. By working with, and building the capacity of, all teachers and teacher educators to engage with wellbeing and learning, we can help to make social and emotional learning a fundamental part of becoming, and being, a teacher.

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Part IV
Closing Section

Social and Emotional Learning: Lessons Learned and Opportunities Going Forward

Andrew J. Martin, Rebecca J. Collie and Erica Frydenberg

Abstract In recent years, there has been a substantial body of theory, research, and practice in the areas of social and emotional learning (SEL) and social and emotional competence (SEC). The bulk of this has centered on research emerging from the USA, the UK, and Europe. However, there is now a growing corpus of work emanating from Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Based on key findings and lessons learned from research and practice conducted in the region (and beyond), the present chapter offers some cautionary notes for future implementation and research into SEL. The chapter also identifies the many exciting opportunities and contributions that SEL theory, research, and practice offer for human development going forward.

Keywords Social and emotional learning · Social and emotional competence · Human development · Australia · Asia-Pacific

1 Introduction

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL 2013), SEL is “the process by which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to recognize and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions [and] handle inter-personal situations effectively” (see also Jennings and Greenberg 2009;

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E. Frydenberg, A.J. Martin and R.J. Collie (eds.), *Social and Emotional Learning in Australia and the Asia-Pacific*, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3394-0_24

Weissberg et al. 2015). Thus, SEL is based on theory, research, and practice aimed at promoting individuals' social and emotional competence (SEC; Collie et al. 2017; Weissberg et al. 2015). SECs that feature in most SEL frameworks include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making, with specific factors subsumed under each of these. SEL develops and sustains these SECs through positive environments and people that foster safety, care, and mental health (Weissberg et al. 2015). This has the effect of promoting academic, personal, and social well-being outcomes (e.g., Brock et al. 2008; Durlak et al. 2011; Tarbetsky et al. 2017).

As the chapters in this volume demonstrate, there is a vast range of SEL and SEC research and practice being conducted in Australia and the wider Asia-Pacific region. In the Australian context, there are studies of SEL initiatives among socially disadvantaged groups (Carroll et al. 2017; Frydenberg and Muller 2017) and Aboriginal/Indigenous youth (Dobia and Roffey 2017); coping programs focusing on SEL and SEC in early childhood (Cornell et al. 2017); SEL as relevant to at-risk children (Martin et al. 2017); work on adolescence and school belonging (Allen et al. 2017); integration of classic theory (e.g., self-determination theory), recent theory (e.g., positive psychology, positive education; O'Connor and Cameron 2017; Slemp et al. 2017) and emerging concepts (e.g., adaptability, buoyancy, mindfulness; Carroll et al. 2017; Tarbetsky et al. 2017); examinations of appropriate SEL and SEC assessment tools (Frydenberg et al. 2017); formal programs that span environment, child, and parent/carer (e.g., Littlefield et al. 2017); and research examining distinct aspects of school contexts that assist SEL (Street 2017). Australian-based work also considers SEL beyond traditional childhood settings and samples to consider SEL in relation to teacher training at university/college (Freeman and Strong 2017; Hazel 2017) and in relation to teachers' own well-being (Collie 2017).

Beyond Australia and into the Asia-Pacific, there is significant work being conducted, including work with students and their mental health in schools in Korea (Lee and Bong 2017); integration of SEL into curriculum in New Zealand as relevant to Maori education (Macfarlane et al. 2017), and across the Pacific (Lagi and Armstrong 2017); SEL curriculum implementation in China (Yu and Jiang 2017); research and practice in Singapore (Liem et al. 2017); and specific SEL strategies such as goal setting in Hong Kong (Wu and Mok 2017).

2 Lessons Learned and Opportunities Going Forward

The chapters in this volume have provided significant detail about the latest and cutting-edge work being conducted in the SEL and SEC space in Australia and the Asia-Pacific. This is noteworthy given the preponderance of SEL literature based in the UK, Europe, and the USA (Collie et al. 2017). These chapters provide detailed insight into the history and future direction of the field with regard to theory, and practice. They also provide a substantial foundation for considering what comes

next. The present chapter thus explores future directions for theory, research, and practice. In some cases, cautionary notes are offered for future implementation and research into SEL. Notwithstanding this, the chapter builds strong foundations for theory, and practice going forward.

2.1 Theory—Going Forward

In considering SEL and its core components, it is evident that the past five decades have seen much work into social skills, self-regulation, emotional development, and the like—long before “SEL” was developed as a formal framework. This raises the question as to what SEL contributes beyond what has gone before. One potential offering is that SEL provides an integrative and organizing framework for a diffuse range of social and emotional constructs. Given the proliferation of these constructs in the psycho-educational literature, frameworks that provide a lens through which to understand, interpret, and apply these constructs are greatly needed.

Another contribution of SEL is that its clear and present focus on pro-social factors and processes may distinguish it from cognate perspectives such as positive psychology (Seligman et al. 2005) and positive education (Martin 2016; Seligman et al. 2009). Indeed, O’Connor and Cameron (2017) argue that positive education programs would do well to incorporate features such as volunteering that link well to the pro-social dimensions of SEL (e.g., CASEL 2013; Weissberg et al. 2015). However, further work with regard to SEL parameters and, more specifically, the ways in which SEL overlaps and is distinct from other major conceptual frameworks is needed.

On a related note, as the field of SEL advances, it is important to guard against the “jingle–jangle” fallacy (e.g., Block 2000) that can plague conceptual frameworks that are new entrants into the psycho-educational domain. Jingle–jangle dangers exist when the same term is used for different constructs or different terms are used for the same construct. This creates confusion and potential distortion within the body of knowledge. SEL is not immune to this risk, considering that it comprises of many cognate constructs. A rigorous approach to SEL theorizing is needed to ensure ongoing consistency and clarity in terminology and operationalization—as well as appropriate differentiation among constructs.

Perhaps more fundamentally, theorists and researchers need to ensure clear demarcation of SEL and SEC. Social and emotional learning (SEL) relates to the teaching and learning of social and emotional competencies (SEC). Hence, theorists and researchers need to be clear that SEL refers to process and practice and SEC refers to the factors and outcomes derived from this process and practice. In SEL and SEC research, this is not always clear, but is critical to get it right so that practitioners know precisely where their efforts are to be directed (viz. on the process, or SEL) and what factors to promote (viz. SEC) when operationalizing this process.

In reading SEL literature, there is sometimes the sense that it is presenting long-established constructs as new ones (the same can be said of cognate frameworks such as positive psychology and positive education—see Martin 2016 for a review). As much as there has been a fresh and energetic engagement with SEL in recent years, there are many constructs and ideas investigated that are already well established in the psycho-educational literature. In such cases, theorists and researchers must make it clear that SEL is confirming and augmenting prior work, not unearthing constructs, factors, or processes for the first time.

Work on SEL in the Asia-Pacific also raises some challenging notions. This work demonstrates that SEL theorizing must account for cross-cultural differences and applications (Hecht and Shin 2015; see also Collie et al. 2017). For example, in Hong Kong, SEL factors include a non-indulgent lifestyle (Wu and Mok 2017), in Korea they include piety (Lee and Bong 2017), and in China they include collectivism (Yu and Jiang 2017; see also Dello-Iacovo 2009). Thus, there are diverse cultural perspectives on what comprises SEL and SEC (see also Torrente et al. 2015) that in some Western and individualistic contexts may not be considered as SEL factors. Yet in Asian contexts, they are not uncommon and have a long cultural and historical foundation. In the Pacific context, there are also some practices under SEL that are potentially challenging—particularly when considered in the current national and international educational climate. For example, with an increased emphasis on accountability, national and international league tables, and standards around literacy and numeracy, some of the cultural activities by boys and girls in traditional Pacific communities (e.g., Lagi and Armstrong 2017; Macfarlane et al. 2017) may be seen as representing a distraction from formal education, academic rigor, and the development of “hard” academic skills (e.g., literacy, numeracy). Yet in these Pacific contexts, they have genuine validity and are linked to positive youth development. Furthermore, noteworthy practices in different cultural contexts have had significant impact on Western research and practice. The adoption of mindfulness as a major psycho-educational intervention and therapeutic approach is but one example (see Brown et al. 2015).

It is also important to acknowledge the role and salience of negative emotions in SEL. In a recent review of positive education in Asia, Martin (2016) noted that there are cultural and historical concepts that recognize the importance of negative emotion. For example, although the Confucian tradition identifies many positive constructs (e.g., effort, love, kindness, respect, and gratitude), it is also the case that Confucius accepted many constructs and concepts that may not align so well with these positive constructs, but which are central to child development. In *Analecst* (Legge’s edition 1971; see Sundararajan 2005 for a summary), Confucius believes that when the occasion calls for it, sadness, sorrow, fear, shame, and anxiety are appropriate. It is also the case that some “negative” constructs may have positive effects (e.g., see Norem 2008 with regard to the potentially positive effects of pessimism). Thus, in promoting many positive psycho-social constructs in its theorizing and implementation, SEL would benefit from appropriately accommodating relevant negative factors as well.

2.2 *Research—Going Forward*

As with many aspects of education and psychology, SEL is susceptible to poor measurement and methodology (Frydenberg et al. 2017; Slemple et al. 2017). Along with the plethora of SEL and SEC constructs comes a plethora of instrumentation. For example, after synthesizing the literature, Frydenberg et al. (2017) found more than 120 measurement/assessment tools concerned with SEL. Some researchers have gone to significant efforts to develop valid measurement and evaluation tools; others, however, use tools (e.g., self-developed and untested) that make valid and reliable assessment difficult, if not impossible. Thus, there is an ongoing need for validation of SEL and SEC instrumentation.

Further, when considering instrumentation to assess SEL and SEC, there is also a need to take into account developmental differences (Denham 2015). Because SEL traverses the life span, it is unlikely that any one instrument can apply to multiple life stages. Frydenberg et al. (2017) observed that different SEL constructs are appropriate to children and young people at different developmental stages. It is therefore critical to understand developmental theory and developmental differences when selecting the most appropriate tools for SEL assessment.

It is also the case that much SEL research rests on convenience and small samples, limiting the capacity to generalize (however, see, e.g., Durlak et al. 2011; Schonfeld et al. 2015). Furthermore, too often there is implementation at just one research context or without a reasonable comparison group, making it difficult to know whether a particular SEL approach is successful or whether other interventions or strategies are more effective. Improved methodology by way of sampling and meaningful assignment of participants to groups that enable valid assessment (e.g., control, comparison, treatment) is needed in the SEL space to better understand what works and for whom (see also Humphrey 2013).

There is also frequent mention in SEL literature about whole-school and whole-class interventions. This somewhat universal (rather than targeted) approach to intervention is in part based on an assumption that SEL constructs are ones that school-level intervention can address. This assumption can be tested empirically through multilevel modeling (Goldstein 2003; Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). With a sufficient number of schools, classes, and students, we can explore how much variation in SEL constructs there is between students, classes, and schools. To the extent there is significant variation in SEL from school to school, then whole-school approaches are feasible. However, if there is more variation between classes than between schools, then whole-class approaches are probably more effective. Or, if there is substantially more variation between students than between classes or schools, then a more individualistic approach is signaled. Thus, some statistical approaches (e.g., multilevel modeling) to SEL research have significant implications for SEL practice.

In a similar vein, SEL research tends to be cross-sectional (conducted at one point in time; however, see for example, Rimm-Kaufman and Chiu 2007; Sklad et al. 2012). This seriously limits the capacity to know if SEL factors and

interventions make a real difference. More longitudinal research is needed. In the main, this would take two forms: correlational and pseudo-experimental (Martin 2011). Longitudinal correlational research would collect SEL data (usually by way of a survey) at two or more points in time (e.g., Rimm-Kaufman and Chiu 2007). Then, statistical analyses could identify the effects of SEL factors (e.g., social skills) on later outcomes (e.g., happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem), controlling for prior variance in outcomes (i.e., controlling for auto-regression). The key here is to partial out prior variance in outcomes (happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem) in order to understand the unique effect of SEL factors (social skills). If SEL factors explain variance in outcomes beyond prior variance in that outcome, then we can say SEL factors make a difference. Pseudo-experimental work would look to implement a SEL intervention to a treatment group and compare pre- and post-test (hence, longitudinal) effects against a control (or meaningful comparison) group (e.g., Schonfeld et al. 2015). Longitudinal studies enable more powerful conclusions and recommendations about what does and does not work.

Finally, as with positive education and positive psychology, among the high-quality conceptualizing and evidence there is a lot of opinion and anecdote in the SEL literature. This “noise” can be very difficult for the practitioner to distinguish from the evidence he/she needs to rely upon when seeking to promote SEL. There is a need for researchers to develop clear practitioner-friendly guidance on core criteria that can be used to identify what programmatic advice has merit and what does not (see also Humphrey 2013).

2.3 Practice—Going Forward

One feature of a good deal of SEL practice is its ad hoc and idiosyncratic implementation (Slemp et al. 2017). In some ways this is understandable and appropriate. Each setting comprises unique elements that require a particular adaptation of SEL (Carroll et al. 2017; Humphrey 2013). However, there is also the risk that program providers depart from evidence-based features of SEL or adapt SEL in a way that is ineffective (Durlak 2015). Ad hoc implementation also makes it difficult to evaluate common features of SEL that do and do not work. It is recommended that program evaluations make clear how a particular SEL program complies with core elements of SEL and what departures are made in its implementation.

A related issue concerns the implementation of a particular SEL approach that has no prior rigorous evaluation (Humphrey 2013; Slemp et al. 2017). Enthusiasm for implementing SEL must be matched by practice that has an evidence base (Durlak 2015; Weissberg et al. 2015). It is also important to guard against SEL approaches that have unintended consequences. The well-established aptitude–treatment interaction research shows that some students are more likely than others to benefit from particular educational practices (Cronbach and Snow 1977; Snow 1991). For example, it may be the case that students already high in SEC may be more capable of understanding and taking on SEL approaches than students who

are not socially or emotionally adept. Therefore, practitioners may need to accommodate such students, particularly in the early phases of SEL implementation.

There is also a risk that some groups have greater access to SEL programs than other groups. For example, some schools and students are better resourced to adopt SEL (O'Connor and Cameron 2017; Slemp et al. 2017). To the extent that this is the case, they may also be more likely to benefit from SEL. Future efforts are needed to develop SEL approaches that are not heavily dependent on resources or socioeconomic advantage and the like.

For effective SEL implementation within a school or university setting, it is often necessary for SEL to be prioritized by institutional leadership and supported by staff and students. However, it is the reality that not all staff and stakeholders are “on board” with SEL. For example, teachers may be advocates, but students are unwilling or unable to engage with SEL. It may also be the case that some staff are not agreeable to SEL (Collie et al. 2012). For example, Slemp et al. (2017) identified the danger of teachers rejecting programs they see as “happiology.” Ongoing efforts must be made to assist school leaders in introducing SEL to staff, and assist staff in introducing it to students (Collie et al. 2015).

In addition, while it is laudable that education systems and jurisdictions adopt SEL as a focus for school implementation (e.g., see Frydenberg and Muller 2017), there is the risk that some schools and some school leadership teams will see this as imposed on them (e.g., see Street 2017). If the program is lacking in autonomous adoption, this may reduce the motivation to conduct it optimally (see Deci and Ryan 2012). For example, it has been noted that if the school leadership is ambivalent about SEL, there is an increased likelihood that some teachers will be ambivalent as well (Frydenberg and Muller 2017). Once more, how SEL is introduced to an organization (e.g., to school leaders, staff, students, and parents) is critical.

Following from this, is there a need to develop some SEL programming or recommendations that are “school-proof”? If a teacher wants to promote SEL and SEC in his or her classroom, but the school and its leadership are not supportive, is there scope to provide guidance to the teacher on how this could be done? Without question, school and leadership support will enhance the capacity of the teacher to promote SEL and SEC—but the absence of such support should not stifle the individual teacher. Is there “SEL-lite” that is actionable in the absence of organizational support?

One barrier to support from leadership and teachers is the fact that the curriculum is crowded and significant accountability pressures exist—leaving little time to take on new initiatives or practices that are (seen as) an add-on to an already busy working life (Roffey 2015). Thus, even with a high-quality SEL program and with the best of intentions on the part of practitioners, there is the very real barrier of time. It is thus critical for SEL practices to be developed, so they can be implemented in the ordinary course of pedagogy as much as is feasible. Developing SEL along these lines has two functions. First, it demonstrates to educational practitioners that SEL advocates are mindful of the constraints under

which practitioners operate—critical for goodwill as SEL is introduced to them. Second, being developed purposefully in this way reduces the onus on the practitioner to adapt and refine it to fit into their pedagogy. The SEL program developer thus does much of the adaptation for the teacher, increasing the chances of uptake.

In saying all this, it is also important to understand that SEL is but one part of child and youth development. Academic growth, for example, is also a major part of development (Anderman et al. 2010, 2015; Harris 2011; Martin 2015b), and SEL advocates need to guard against diminishing or ignoring the realities of academic life (e.g., literacy, numeracy, testing) in child and youth development (Martin 2015a). While it is the case that both can be mutually reinforcing (Frydenberg and Muller 2017), SEL programing is not intended to be at the expense of instruction in “hard” academic skills (e.g., literacy, numeracy) and “traditional” academic processes and outcomes.

There is also a question around the amount and type of expertise brought into an organization as it implements SEL. SEL implementation ranges from ad hoc in-house programs through to the formal involvement of external experts who closely advise and support the program (Humphrey 2013; O’Connor and Cameron 2017; Slemp et al. 2017). Further research is needed to understand the effectiveness of diverse approaches, weighing benefits against cost. On the one hand, in-house implementation can be cost-effective, possibly better suited to the distinct needs of the organization, and perhaps sustainable if there is an internal advocate or champion. However, it may lack the expertise needed for high-quality implementation and evaluation. On the other hand, external expertise may elevate the quality of SEL implementation and assessment, but run the “train and hope” risk (Freeman and Strong 2017; O’Connor and Cameron 2017) as the expert departs the setting leaving no one in the organization to sustain or progress it.

Whether to integrate SEL in a lesson or to have it as a standalone unit (or subject) is also a topic of debate. Some researchers and practitioners have implemented special programs in designated classes (e.g., O’Connor and Cameron 2017). Others have embedded SEL into lessons and subjects (e.g., Frydenberg and Muller 2017). It is unclear which is the most effective and so further research is needed. Each approach has significantly different implications for the nature of the SEL program, its elements, and how it is implemented. No doubt, each will have its respective merits and drawbacks; thus, specific guidance to practitioners is important to allow them to make the appropriate decisions when implementing SEL.

There is also the question about how much practitioners should, themselves, be the focus of SEL intervention (Collie 2017; see also Jennings and Frank 2015; Jennings and Greenberg 2009). For example, what is the capacity of a teacher to teach SECs such as empathy or inter-personal effectiveness to students if hampered by their own lack of emotional insight or relational difficulties? While there is attention to the engagement and enthusiasm of practitioners to implement SEL, there is far less attention given to the SEC of practitioners themselves. There is a need for research to identify the extent to which engagement and enthusiasm for

SEL implementation is sufficient—or whether there is also a need for high SEC among practitioners as well.

Finally, in deciding on approaches to promoting SEL, it is important to know how much effort to direct toward the individual child or young person and how much to direct toward the organization. As noted earlier, whole-school approaches are often encouraged by researchers (e.g., Frydenberg and Muller 2017; O'Connor and Cameron 2017; Slemp et al. 2017), but this assumes that there is sufficient variance in SEL constructs at the school level. In fact, much multilevel modeling research shows that for many psychological constructs (including many under the SEL umbrella), there is far more variation between individuals than between schools (Martin et al. 2011). Similarly, given developmental differences in how SEL is construed and functions (e.g., Denham 2015; Frydenberg et al. 2017), we might ask the same question at different school stages, such as between elementary and high school. To the extent that this is the case, it suggests that SEL should be targeted rather than universal in its approach. However, the reality is that it is not feasible to individualize SEL for all students. Practitioners must therefore carefully manage inherent tensions between targeted and universal approaches to SEL. More research to guide them is needed here.

3 Conclusion

Social and emotional learning is increasingly recognized as a vital component for human development. It has many intra- and inter-personal yields. The work presented in this volume (and beyond it) shows that there have been valuable lessons learned for high-quality implementation of SEL. Importantly, this volume also demonstrates that there are theory, research, and practice in Australia and the Asia-Pacific that provide constructive and promising foundations for social and emotional learning going forward.

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