The Impact of Social-Emotional Competence on Academic Achievement and Career Success within Urban School Systems

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the critical role of social-emotional learning (SEL) in urban education through the lens of educators working in a diverse middle school setting in St. Louis, Missouri. With a focus on understanding educators' perceptions and experiences, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of SEL programs in addressing the various needs of students, particularly those from marginalized communities. The researchers use a qualitative approach, utilizing surveys with open-ended questions to gather insights from middle school teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators. The study dove into various aspects of SEL implementation through rigorous data collection and analysis, including its impact on teaching strategies, classroom dynamics, and professional development initiatives.

Ethical considerations are carefully addressed, ensuring participant confidentiality and informed consent throughout the research process. Data analysis follows a systematic approach, including open coding, development of themes, and creation of a comprehensive codebook that includes meaningful insights. The researchers' findings highlight the significance of SEL in promoting whole-child development, fostering positive relationships, and dismantling the adverse effects of socio-economic disparities and trauma experienced by many urban students. Researchers gathered from the research that educators understand the importance of having a SEL curriculum in place and recognize its ability to improve academic success, career readiness, and overall well-being.

Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the correlation between SEL, urban education, and student success. Prioritizing
educators' voices and experiences offers valuable insights for policymakers, school administrators, and practitioners seeking to create inclusive and supportive learning environments that empower all students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.
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LaShanda R. Boone

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you shall perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

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Chapter One: Problem of Practice

Social and emotional learning (SEL) refers to the ability to “recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish and maintain positive relationships with others” (Ragozzino et al., 2003, p. 169). The concept continues to gain popularity within the American education system. Educators recognize the importance of SEL and its positive impact on students (Hoffman, 2009). Students would benefit from incorporating SEL into school systems inside and outside the classroom. They would develop skills to manage the rigors and time commitment of the classroom, learn how to manage their emotions and relationships, and improve their awareness of their environment (Elias, 2004). Although the benefits of SEL remain constant, the implementation can be differentiated. Some SEL initiatives are integrated into learning curriculums within the classroom, while other SEL programs are reflected in after-school activities (Denham & Brown, 2010).

Although SEL is not a requirement within many of the educational curriculum models used today, many students feel its impact as they matriculate throughout all levels of the educational system (Oberle et al., 2014). The competencies below influence behavior and could impact student academic success (Payton et al., 2000). Some of the positive outcomes of SEL are academic performance and positively navigating adulthood. It is reflected in education, professional and full-time employment, and family dynamics. Successful implementation of the concept would result in the holistic development of all students (“Systemic Implementation,” n.d.).
THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Background of the Problem

Social, Cultural, and Historical Perspectives

SEL has historical roots in the broader field of education and psychology. The idea of nurturing students' social and emotional skills dates back to early educational philosophers and psychologists, such as John Dewey and Howard Gardner. Dewey emphasized the importance of social and emotional development in the early 20th century, laying the groundwork for later SEL theories (Dewey, 1916).

Theories of social and emotional development have significantly influenced the conceptualization of SEL. Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of development and Jean Piaget's cognitive-developmental theory have been foundational in understanding how individuals navigate social and emotional challenges at different life stages (Erikson, 1950; Piaget, 1952).

The 1990s marked a significant period for the development of structured SEL programs. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) played a pivotal role in consolidating SEL as a distinct field. Collaborative efforts during this time led to the identification of core competencies, forming the basis for many contemporary SEL programs (CASEL, 2005).

SEL is intertwined with the broader concept of school climate, encompassing the quality and character of school life. SEL's collaborative and supportive nature aligns with efforts to create positive school climates that foster learning and well-being (Zins et al., 2004). SEL integration with school climate involves creating a supportive and positive environment that fosters the development of students' social and emotional skills. SEL and school climate are
reciprocal, influencing and reinforcing each other.

Traditionally, public schools have promulgated policies and practices that provide direct consequences for disciplinary infractions. Districts have a code of conduct, or disciplinary guidelines, approved by the school board that explicitly outlines offenses from minor to egregious, along with stated consequences or penalties. Additionally, schools are protected under the Safe Schools Act of 1994 to provide violent-free learning environments for disciplinary infractions such as violence or violent behavior, weapons, drugs, and arson (Heaviside et al., 1998).

Behavioral challenges and student behavior disruptions in urban schools are often addressed with policies that mimic the criminal justice system. “Zero-tolerance” policies allow school leaders to suspend students for a first-offense infraction. School Resource Officers are sometimes armed with guns, tasers, mace, and handcuffs, depending on the school and its needs. Upon arrival, visitors and students are screened by either passing through metal detectors, being physically searched, or being scanned with handheld metal detectors by resource officers (Heaviside et al.).

School visitors must present their legal identification for admittance and often leave their identification with school personnel in the main office during their visit. Students generally cannot leave class without a pass and are often questioned if they are in the hallway during class time. Students must walk in a single-file line in early childhood and elementary school settings as they move through the halls. During dismissal, students are met by School Resource Officers or Police Officers who escort them from school grounds (Heaviside et al., 1998). These practices are eerily similar to methods of the penal systems, thus subliminally perpetuating the school-to-prison pipeline.
This dissertation provides a rationale and summary that will address underlying issues that cause students to display concerning behaviors and the strategies that schools can implement to appropriately address them with research-based social and emotional learning initiatives programs. Schools shift from applying acute disciplinary procedures to (restorative) practices that encourage emotional dexterity. The rationale for this shift is to reduce both in-school and out-of-school suspensions that have no bearing on improved behavior choices and foster critical thinking skills that lead to long-term success in every aspect of a student’s life.

Schools are implementing programs that address social-emotional wellness as a public health approach to education. Social-emotional learning counters traditional disciplinary approaches, as students are taught strategies and skills that cause them to make conscious decisions to effectively manage common personal and social challenges. Direct outcomes of social-emotional learning in schools are centered on five competence clusters that promote self-awareness, self-regulation, relationship skills, social acuteness, and responsible decision-making (Heaviside et al.).

**Local Contextual Perspectives**

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) examined the homicide rates using local data. They reported statistics that indicated historic highs in the metropolis of St. Louis, which has a population of approximately 300,000. In 2020, 90% of the 262 homicides were committed with a firearm, and the St. Louis homicide rate was 16 times greater than the national average. St. Louis accounted for 30% of all homicides in Missouri in 2019 despite its representation of only 5% of the state's
population (Fatal Injury Reports, National, Regional, and State, 1981 – 2019). In addition to the homicide statistics, 19.1% of St. Louis citizens had a below-poverty income in 2019, 32.4% greater than the state's poverty rate of 12.9%. Among non-family inhabitants, 21.9% of high school graduates and 44.5% of non-high school graduates resided in poverty (city-data 2022; Tabb V 2022).

Youth in low-income urban communities experience significantly greater exposure to community violence than those in middle-class, upper-class, or suburban settings (Gaylord-Harden et al., p.712, 2011). This continuous cycle of violence directly correlates to increases in sadness, anxiety, and/or other psychological trauma. Also, prolonged exposure to poverty could increase emotional dysregulation and other mental disorders (Swanson & Belden, 2018).

So that young people can overcome the environmental disadvantages that they experience, they must receive a quality education that could alter the course of their lives. According to Machin (2011), as children dedicate more time to academics, the opportunity to engage in criminal conduct decreases. Effective instruction can ensure that students complete high school at a minimum, which allows them to enter the workforce. While completing secondary education could be the minimum achievement, other students could pursue a postsecondary degree, allowing them to compete for better-paying employment and seek their desired careers (Nikulina et al., 2011).

While education for everyone may appear to be the solution, addressing the disparities that impede this objective is crucial. According to the Missouri Equity Report (2019), almost one in five African-American young adults aged 16 to 24 are neither in school nor employed). The data provided by the Missouri Equity study
has prompted educators in Missouri to investigate systemic injustices and their
direct impact on students' academic progress. In addition, the report illuminated
college readiness, early college programs, ACT scores, remedial education,
progress and retention, and excellent academic advancement. The findings
demonstrated a consistent pattern: black pupils are statistically inferior to their
counterparts.

**Candidate’s Perspective**

According to Schonert-Reichl (2017), school environments with positive
“teacher-child relationships support deep learning and positive, social and
emotional development among students” (p. 137). Jones and Doolittle (2017)
added that SEL could be taught and cultivated in school systems to impact
student thinking, emotional development, and behavior outcomes, thereby
increasing the likelihood of positive life choices. Yonder (2014) concludes that
researchers concur that teachers have a meaningful impact on student learning.
Effective teachers intertwine academic achievement and social development to
teach the whole child effectively.

SEL is essential to introducing postsecondary skills, which requires the
student to demonstrate a higher level of critical thinking skills to engage in the
academic rigor of college/training instruction. CASEL (2010) reported that
educators could assist students with the development of social and emotional
skills through direct instruction, engaging lessons, and specific instructional
processes. According to Haymovitz et al. (2018), modeling is especially effective
in developing social-emotional skills. Thus, teachers must model appropriate
behaviors and provide frequent opportunities for students to practice social and
emotional learning skills.

Weissberg (2016) reported that school systems are motivated to serve students, influencing the students to engage in teaching and learning and exhibiting positive behavior attributes, yielding increased academic performance outcomes. SEL programs provide a foundation to enhance student success in school, careers, and life. SEL increases prosocial behavior (kindness, consideration, care), improves the student's perspective, and aids in the relief of stress and anxiety (Weissberg, R. 2016). SEL teaches students to manage their emotions, understand others’ perspectives, have healthy empathy, and make sound personal and social decisions. Effective SEL programs assist students with the development of a positive self-concept, a good attitude toward others, increased confidence, tenacity, a more significant connection to the school, a sense of purpose, positive relationships with peers and adults, decreased conduct concerns, reduced stress, and improvement in academic outcomes and attendance. Jones and Doolittle (2017) added that SEL is critical to life outcomes and success in school, college entry and completion, career satisfaction, and earning potential.

Impact of SEL and the Whole Child Perspective

According to Mental Health First Aid, one in six American children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 experience a mental health condition yearly (Solomon-Maynard, 2020). This statistic emphasizes the necessity for instructors to be trained to assist students with social and emotional needs. Educators must also demonstrate empathy and recognize that traditional learning may be negatively impacted if a child does not receive the necessary support. Students who experience mental health concerns have trouble controlling their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013).

These students become the focus of the school’s staff team because their behaviors are too severe to be ignored and must be addressed (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013). While the support staff attempts to reduce behavioral outbursts, aid in the development of behavioral intervention plans, and give redirection, many adolescents continue to be neglected. Teachers are not qualified therapists or counselors; thus, they frequently limit their engagement to address students' social and emotional needs. Teachers must work with school support professionals since they spend the most time with their assigned pupils and are, therefore, most likely to notice students who may be challenged with mental health difficulties (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013).

The ability of teachers to communicate classroom behavioral changes or concerns is crucial to administering the best care to pupils (Anello et al., 2017; Weist et al., 2017). Unmonitored student behaviors might severely affect classroom performance and outcomes (Marsh, 2016; Resler, 2017; Souers & Hall, 2016). Students who struggle with mental health who are not equipped with services to assist them with coping and controlling their emotions are more likely to underachieve, drop out, and/or engage in negative self-talk and/or self-harm (Cefai & Camilleri, 2015; Franklin et al., 2012; Whitley & Gooderham, 2015).

Emerging data from developmental and educational research suggests that the development of social-emotional, self-regulatory, and academic competencies are frequently interwoven and supportive (e.g., Blair & Razza, 2007; Howse, Calkins, Anastopoulos, Keane, & Shelton, 2003; Liew, McTigue, Barrois, & Huges, 2008; McClelland et al., 2007, as cited in Liew 2010). Educators must
develop a strategy to emphasize traditional curriculum while addressing the holistic requirements of the child. A growing body of empirical research has established a link between effortful control and academic achievement in young school-aged children, particularly those from low-income families and ethnic minorities (e.g., Blair & Razza, 2007; Liew et al., 2008; McClelland et al., 2007, as cited in Liew 2010). Educational curriculum schools must integrate self-regulation skills into classroom education to promote student achievement and provide kids with the tools to manage stress and control emotions.

**No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 increased teachers' expectations to improve students' academic performance while ignoring the importance of teaching critical soft skills (Devaney et al., 2005). It did not take long for educational stakeholders to realize that social and emotional programs positively impact students in the classroom. Social-emotional learning (SEL) aims to provide students with a secure learning environment, improve their peer relationships, and reduce behavioral problems, emotional stress, and academic disparities. This evidence-based instruction was based on The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) "Five Core Competencies for Social and Emotional Learning" (CASEL, 2012) and "Four Strategies that Promote SEL" (Dusenbury, Calin, Domitrovich, & Weissberg, 2015). A comprehensive, school-wide SEL initiative in which teachers, counselors, and school administrators collaborate to meet the SEL needs of students is necessary. This can be achieved by integrating SEL into all classrooms to assist students in cultivating greater self-awareness, enhancing their ability to manage their emotions and
behaviors, and addressing interpersonal conflicts. Teachers also need to determine the SEL skills they must implement based on the needs of their students.

When NCLB failed to achieve its goals, researchers realized that introducing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) would improve students' learning ability and cultivate more responsible citizens (Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013). Therefore, when teachers and policymakers began to develop a new national policy to replace NCLB, they all agreed that SEL should be included. When the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law, which replaced NCLB in December 2015, schools were required to create safe, healthy, and supportive environments to assist every student in improving their performance in school.

In 2018, the CASEL organization reviewed the SEL policies and guidelines in all 50 states. The scan indicated that each 50 states exhibited SEL competencies or standards for preschool, and 11 states extended beyond preschool into the early elementary school years. In 2018, only 18 states adopted SEL standards or competencies for grades K-12, while only one was included in the 2011 scan. Online SEL resources for students and parents were only available in 21 states (CASEL, 2020).

Many states have used the funding to improve SEL programming and policies (CASEL, 2020). Several members of Congress have introduced various policies to support SEL, but they have not received sufficient support for them to become law. In 2018, the Aim Higher Act, a modification of the Higher Education Act of 1965, was proposed for consideration (Scott, 2018).

The Aim Higher Act would focus on programs and training preparing teachers

**District-Wide Support and Implementation Policy for SEL Curriculum/Programs**

Social and emotional learning skills are becoming a significant topic of discussion among educators. Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners must pay careful and coordinated attention to education policy components. To effect changes in the cultivation and enhancement of noncognitive skills in schools and to make the development of the whole child the central mission of education policy (Comer, 2005, as cited in Garcia & Weiss 2016). To incorporate SEL skills into education policies, researchers must build a system for measuring success.

Comprehension and improvement of connections between teachers and students are essential for effectively promoting social and emotional learning. (Garcia & Weiss, 2016). In addition to enhancing student-teacher interactions, teachers must explore ways to enhance the previous curriculum to promote SEL skills. Thus, the larger curriculum should include strategies that indirectly foster specific social and behavioral abilities that leverage other skill sets (Olson 2012, as cited in Gacia & Weiss 2016).

Teachers must establish a consensus to integrate SEL skills into the traditional curriculum. Teachers will require professional development opportunities to explore innovative ideas that will improve the comprehensive development of students. This professional development program will focus on pedagogy, leadership, and organizational skills. It could complement existing training initiatives whose aim is to
enhance the proficiency of educators regarding cognitive instruction. This would provide educators with an enhanced comprehension of the whole child development principles and the ability to integrate them into the academic curriculum (Comer, 2005, as cited in Garcia & Weiss, 2016). To provide the necessary support for the effective implementation and sustained maintenance of academic and SEL integration, education policy must expand its present teacher training programs to ensure that all staff members are well-informed of SEL competencies and can explain the curriculum. In addition to thoroughly understanding SEL competencies and incorporating the curriculum in the classroom, school leaders and their disciplinary approaches must evolve with the school culture.

The objective of cultivating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills and teaching opportunities is impeded by punitive actions based on unacceptable student conduct. Such responses to uncooperative, chaotic, or disruptive behavior are detrimental to student development and unlikely to prevent the recurrence of such behavior in the future. Despite the low value placed on noncognitive skills in U.S. education systems, there is an increased effort at the local, state, and federal levels to reverse this (Garcia & Weiss 2016). Several major organizations in the United States, like the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and CASEL, have long supported efforts to cultivate noncognitive skills. Institutions such as the Learning Policy Institute and the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development of the Aspen Institute have recently been formed to support this work (Garcia & Weiss 2016). These groups have already impacted a rising minority of school districts with their Whole-Child approach concerning educational accomplishment and promoting healthy student
connections. Typically, these districts evaluate school performance based on a more extensive range of criteria, and they use the resulting data to focus on student support and improved procedures (Garcia & Weiss 2016).
Specific Problem of Practice

Problem of Practice

Students who attend schools in urban settings often battle to attain high academic performance, which leads to poor career success. The difficulty seems to be caused by a lack of self-awareness and self-management. The students also do not understand how to make responsible decisions, nor do they understand how to establish and maintain relationships. The lack of interpersonal skills leads to behavioral problems, lack of motivation, and low academic performance.

Significance of Study

This research aims to document educator perceptions of the impact of social-emotional learning in regard to academic achievement and career success. This problem of practice aims to heighten awareness among leaders in school districts and postsecondary institutions regarding the importance of implementing SEL curriculums at all levels.

A few of the abilities necessary for laborers are examining undertakings, tackling issues, self-monitoring, and connecting with others. These skills and competencies span two key constructs—SEL and employability skills. Both constructs relate positively to the outcomes of adult learners (Wisniewski and Foster, 2021). The current K-16 educational curriculum offers courses that teach basic employability skills, such as completing an application and interviewing for a job. Unfortunately, the courses are not required, and not all students attain the skills and competencies necessary to obtain and maintain a position. In recent years, employers across all industries have observed an increase in the lack of power skills necessary for individuals to succeed. SEL must be required in K-16
education to increase employee sustainability.

Various businesses have outlined the detailed need for employability skills and suggest that organizations often center around these skills instead of scholarly accomplishments (Bauer-Wolf, 2019; Casner-Lotto and Barrington, 2006). For example, an assessment of skill demand among 25 of the greatest supervisors in Canada recognized three orders: (a) correspondence, definitive thinking, and enduring learning; (b) positive attitudes and approaches to acting, commitments, and adaptability; (c) joint effort (McLaughlin, 1995).

The five core competencies of SEL are pivotal to workplace readiness and success (Paolini, 2020). These competencies have a core set of skills people must possess to be career-ready. The core SEL skills are cognitive regulation, emotional processes, and social and interpersonal skills, which prepare individuals for success and longevity in any career. Youth in the current K-12 environment are challenged with exhibiting appropriate behavior, appropriate responses to directives, and proper conflict resolution skills. They also lack the ability to make sound decisions and focus on a specific task. Cognitive regulation skills teach attention control, prepare them to maintain focus and retain information, and enable them to see issues from different perspectives (Paolini, 2020). Students who master the components of cognitive regulation will increase productivity and goal achievement in the workplace.

Another core skill of SEL is to effectively process emotions. This skill enhances the self-awareness of the individual. It enables students to recognize, identify, express, and control their emotions. Many children and teenagers do not understand their emotions, which leads to explosive behaviors in school and,
ultimately, in the workplace. Students who learn to process emotions can solve problems healthily and constructively (Paolini, 2020).

The third core SEL skill is social and interpersonal skills. This skill primarily enhances the ability of an individual to communicate effectively and interact more positively with peers and colleagues. The ability of the employee to work with others and negotiate and solve problems collaboratively is essential to employability.

Additionally, intrapersonal skills are also a component of SEL programs. Several intrapersonal skills are significant for career readiness. Those skills are adaptability, self-regulation, growth mindset, optimism, leadership, time and stress management, creativity, resilience, and character (Paolini, 2020). These intrapersonal skills are what it takes for individuals to work effectively and efficiently. The growth mindset allows individuals to reach their potential in their chosen careers.

Interpersonal skills are another skill that is needed for career success. These skills allow one to interact with others effectively. These skills are also relevant to career readiness. Those skills are communication and active listening, conscientiousness, accountability, problem-solving/conflict resolution, empathy, and motivation (Paolini, 2020).

**Limitations and Delimitations**

One limitation of this research is that the faculty and staff of one educational institution are participating in the focus group. While this makes the research more manageable, it does limit the amount of data that can be collected. A delimitation of this research study is that career success after high school will be included as part of the data collection process. However, career success following
postsecondary graduation will not be included.

**Conceptual Framework**

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, fondly known as CASEL, was founded in 1994. However, SEL is a concept that was first developed in 1987 by educators and researchers who felt that the education system lacked something pivotal toward student development. This group was led by Timothy Shriver and Dr. Roger P. Weissberg (“Our History,” n.d.). While the curriculum for educational systems has evolved over the years, the inconsistency of SEL implementation has remained constant.

CASEL has developed social-emotional learning (SEL) from a promising hypothesis to a fundamental piece of schooling. As a not-for-profit forerunner in SEL, CASEL is particularly situated to assess programming, curate research, illuminate regulation, and accomplice on execution. Additionally, CASEL is committed to working with researchers, policymakers, and professionals to guarantee top caliber, proof-based SEL for all (Our Mission and Work - CASEL, 2023).

To enhance the conceptual understanding of CASEL, a visual wheel was created to demonstrate the five competencies that constitute CASEL: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. The environment of the student outside of the classroom influences these competencies. The classroom, educational institutions, at-home support systems, and communities are all factors that influence student presence in the classroom. These factors are also present on the CASEL Wheel (“What is the CASEL Framework,” n.d.). A description of each competency will be
detailed below.

**Self-Awareness**

Self-awareness is an internal reflection process in which one considers environmental factors that may or may not affect them personally but affect their engagement and adulthood (Morin, 2011). This competency is present when someone can understand their emotions, reflect on their internal strengths and weaknesses, and increase their self-efficacy orientation (Demink-Carthew et al., 2020). Kao (2017) conducted a case study to observe social and emotional learning in an ELL classroom. This study investigated how social and emotional learning, bullying prevention, and character education programs were implemented in an elementary ELL classroom. The theoretical approach of this study is rooted in CASEL's "Five Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2012, p. 9) and the "Four Strategies that Promote SEL" (Dusenbury, Calin, Domitrovich, & Weissberg, 2015, p. 2). Researchers observed two ELL instructors at work in the classroom and conducted interviews with ELL teachers, a school counselor, and the school principal; as a result, they were able to collect ethnographic data from these sources.

The structure and four methods of teaching SEL developed by CASEL benefit ELL children in the classroom. Specifically, there should be a focus on teaching English language skills that enhance self-awareness and facilitate the self-management of emotions, behavior, and interpersonal conflicts. Additionally, when teachers select specific SEL skills that they will incorporate into their lesson plans, it is crucial to consider the unique needs of ELL students. To ensure that the
specific SEL requirements of ELL students are met, the school and ELL instructors must consider cultural background and language proficiency when determining which SEL skills to emphasize and how to teach SEL. Additionally, the study determined that ELL students need a school-wide SEL initiative in which administrators, counselors, and teachers collaborate to meet their SEL requirements.

**Self-Management**

The self-management competency in the CASEL framework seeks to explain one’s ability to govern emotions, stress levels, self-discipline, and self-motivation regarding personal achievement (Alexander & Vermette, 2019). This competency is linked to goal achievement and organizational planning skills (“What is the CASEL Framework,” n.d.). While self-awareness emphasizes internal processing, self-management emphasizes implementation to achieve a goal; there are many ways that this competency can be implemented into the curriculum of an institution. After-school programs, in-class activities and assignments, and meaningful relationships between faculty/staff and students are a few examples educators can consider for incorporating self-management practices/exercises into their work with students.

Another study highlights a program, *Experiencing Emotions*, used to gauge its effect on the well-being and engagement of students within Portuguese schools. The program is structured as an after-school program that creates activities that promote socio-emotional learning for middle school students. One program is a dance class derived from art therapy's foundations. The goal is to teach students to control their body movements and maintain focus while learning something new.
Students were also exposed to different genres of music during this study which helps to develop multicultural awareness. It also provides a social connection among the students (Periera & Marques-Pinto, 2017).

To better understand how this program affects the student participants, researchers provided a pre- and post-assessment to students to track their understanding of the CASEL competencies (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making).

Subsequently, researchers split the students into two groups. One group participates in the activities, and the other group does not. Upon review of the post-assessment, the results proved that students who participated in the activities had a higher understanding of self-management and relationship skills (Pereira & Marques-Pinto, 2017).

**Responsible Decision-Making**

According to the CASEL Framework, responsible decision-making is described as the ability “to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations” (“What is the CASEL Framework,” n.d.). This competency is highlighted as students make personal, academic, and career plans following high school (Ross & Tolan, 2018). There has been abundant research to support Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and the positive impact of social-emotional competence in relation to overall student success. Responsible decision-making is an integral part of SEL and refers to a student’s ability to make constructive choices regarding personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms (Greenberg et al., 2017). These skills are vital for students, particularly at the
middle school level, when young people must navigate significant biological and cognitive changes as they transition from childhood to adolescence. Adolescents endure immense pressures during this period due to greater independence and increased responsibilities and expectations. In addition, adolescents experience a shift in social relationships at this age. These changes may cause feelings of isolation and loneliness that can lead to self-esteem issues and render students vulnerable to peer pressure. Green et al. suggest that social-emotional competence is key. Because adolescence is a phase that poses many challenges for youth, middle school is a pivotal time to address these issues and strengthen students’ coping, decision-making, and problem-solving skills (2020).

Green et al., 2021 conducted a study that evaluated the efficacy of The Speaking to the Potential, Ability, and Resilience Inside Every Kid (SPARK) Pre-Teen Mentoring Curriculum. Three hundred fifty-seven students were selected from two middle schools to participate in the study. The SPARK Pre-Teen Curriculum is a classroom-based SEL program aligned with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework. The program is designed to reduce student risk factors, build resiliency, promote emotional well-being, and facilitate school success in youth between the ages of 10-13 years of age. The Spark facilitators taught a curriculum of 12 lessons in hourly sessions delivered sequentially over 12-13 weeks. The lessons strengthen students’ capacity to manage relationships, responsibilities, and expectations (Green et al., 2021).

The research revealed that following the implementation of the SPARK SEL curriculum, participants showed significant improvement in communication,
problem-solving, and decision-making skills compared to students who did not participate in the program. Furthermore, students who completed the program also used a more positive approach to solve their problems, were able to better regulate their emotions, and practiced peaceful conflict resolution strategies. Empirical research proposes that SEL programs positively influence responsible decision-making skills. These programs enhance student empathy and empower students to understand their feelings and the effects of their actions on others (Green et al., 2021).

**Relationship Skills**

Communication and relationship-building skills are the cornerstones of the relationship skills competency in the CASEL Wheel (Ross & Tolan, 2018). It focuses on maintaining meaningful relationships, navigating cultural similarities and differences, and conflict resolution. Active listening and promoting support for others are a part of this competency (“What is the CASEL Framework,” n.d.). In recent years workforce needs have changed. The shift has moved from mastery of standard scholarly subjects to a need for power skills "business and political pioneers are progressively requesting that schools foster abilities such as critical thinking, decisive reasoning correspondence, coordinated effort, and self-administration" as well as related delicate abilities (Public Exploration Committee, 2012, p. 1). The Organization for 21st Century Learning (P21), incorporates individuals from the local public business area, training pioneers, and strategic creators, reasoned that "an emphasis on imagination, decisive reasoning, correspondence, and joint effort is fundamental to plan understudies for what's to come' and is among the main abilities, information, and skills that individuals need
to master to succeed in work and life in years to come (P21, 2017). Additionally,
"improving close-to-home capacities in early years might give kids a helpful device in making progress during adulthood" (Ulutaş and Ömeroğlu, 2007, p. 1371).

In a review led by the Relationship of American Schools and Colleges, managers who are employing graduates say they "put the best need on an exhibited capability in abilities and information that cut across majors" and that "composed and oral relational abilities, cooperation abilities, moral direction, decisive reasoning abilities, and the capacity to apply information in true settings are the most exceptionally esteemed" (Hart Exploration Partners, 2016, p. 4). "In the twenty-first 100 years, authority of the essential abilities of perusing, composing, and math is as of now adequately not. Practically any work presently calls for representatives who know how to settle a scope of scholarly and specialized issues" (Wagner, 2014).

Social Awareness

The social awareness competency encompasses all of the abovementioned competencies. It is grounded in the orientation of understanding general social norms and perspectives from diverse backgrounds. Cultural sensitivity, empathy, and compassion align with this competency (Borowski, 2019; “What is the CASEL Framework,” n.d.). Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs have been widely implemented in schools and other settings to foster social awareness among participants. Social awareness is a critical component of SEL, and it involves understanding and empathizing with the feelings, perspectives, and needs of others. Empirical research in this area explores the development of social awareness in individuals, its impact on various aspects of life, and the effectiveness of
interventions to enhance social awareness.

In their analysis of 213 school-based SEL programs, Durlack (2011) analyzed 213 school-based SEL programs and determined that such interventions significantly positively impacted social awareness among students. The study highlights the effectiveness of SEL programs for improving social awareness skills. SEL programs have also consistently shown positive effects on empathy and perspective-taking, both central components of social awareness. Research has demonstrated that participants in SEL interventions tend to exhibit greater empathy toward others and a heightened ability to understand different perspectives (Durlak et al., 2011). SEL programs often incorporate activities that encourage students to consider the feelings and perspectives of their peers and others in various situations.

Espelage (2003) found that SEL programs emphasize developing positive interpersonal skills, contributing to improved social awareness. Students learn to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and engage in cooperative activities. Studies have shown that students who have participated in SEL programs are better equipped to build and maintain positive relationships with their peers due to their increased understanding of emotions, which allows them to respond empathetically to the needs of others (Espelage et al., 2003). SEL programs are also associated with a decrease in negative social behaviors such as aggression, bullying, and social exclusion. These programs teach students to recognize and manage their emotions constructively, reducing the likelihood of engagement in harmful behaviors toward others. A study by Jones and Bouffard (2012) revealed that students who participated in an SEL program demonstrated a significant decrease
in these behaviors and an increase in prosocial behavior, reflecting an improved ability to consider the social consequences of their actions. Empirical research suggests that SEL programs positively impact social awareness. These programs enhance the development of empathy, perspective, and interpersonal skills among students while reducing negative social behaviors. Moreover, the effects of SEL interventions can extend beyond the immediate program period, contributing to their long-term social and emotional development.

Central Research Questions

Purpose of Study

This problem of practice aims to examine educators' perceptions regarding the impact of social-emotional competence on academic achievement and career success. As researchers, we want to inform educational leaders and policymakers about the importance of implementing SEL in the academic curriculum. The researchers have diverse backgrounds and work experiences in various educational sectors, and the commonality among our professional experiences dictates the need for us to advocate for the implementation of SEL programs into the academic curriculum.

Research Questions

The following research questions aimed to investigate, comprehend, and articulate the SEL learning curriculum in an urban school district. The researchers aimed to customize the questions to determine the program's effectiveness and solicit educators' feedback regarding academic and postsecondary readiness. The research questions are detailed below:

- In an urban education classroom, how do teachers implement social
and emotional skills?

- Is students' academic progress directly impacted by their understanding of social and emotional learning?
- Do students who have not been exposed to SEL feel confident in their pursuit of post-secondary options?
- Of the five SEL competencies, which competency needs to be prioritized for the population of students who will be the subjects of this research?
Chapter Two: Methods and Design for Action

To meet the changing needs of modern schools, school improvement, and system changes are required. Schools today must constantly plan for improvement and adapt to the changing needs of students and communities. Intentional system change can be defined as the process by which an organization attempts to change its existing practices to improve current functioning and positively impact desired outcomes. When academic achievement goals are the main focus of the curriculum, the structure of the assessment schedule pertains to assessment dissemination in the form of frequent, standardized tests that contain instruments that compare to the norm. These tests measure or record student progress toward achieving a statewide goal that has already been set. Standardization is necessary to serve as a standard metric for comparison. Comparisons can be used to document student growth and compare student performance across schools, districts, and states. Furthermore, student scores on standardized assessments are frequently used to determine the efficacy and funding of school programs, school systems or districts, and states (Liew, J., & McTigue, E. M. 2010).

Although standardized achievement assessments are valuable methods for large-scale summarization and comparisons (Cizek, 2001), it is important to note that they are less appropriate for use with individual student learning and progress (Paris, Lawton, Turner, & Roth, 1991). When administered to individual students, standardized examinations can inform whether students meet or fail to meet defined criteria or benchmarks. Still, they do not offer much information on how to guide students toward the goal. Emerging evidence from developmental and educational research suggests that social-emotional, self-regulation, and academic
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(e.g., Blair & Razza, 2007; Howse, Calkins, Anastopoulos, Keane, & Shelton, 2003; Liew, McTigue, Barrois, & Huges, 2008; McClelland et al., 2007, as cited in Liew 2010), competencies are frequently intertwined and complementary to one another's development (e.g., Barrois, & Huges, 2008; McClelland et al., 2007, as cited in Liew 2010).

Educators must find a way to prioritize traditional curriculum and meet the whole child's needs. A growing body of empirical evidence confirms a clear link between effortful control and academic achievement in young school-aged children, including children from low-income and ethnic minority families (e.g., Blair & Razza, 2007; Liew et al., 2008; McClelland et al., 2007, as cited in Liew 2010). School curricula should incorporate self-regulation skills into classroom instruction to increase student achievement and provide students with the necessary tools to cope with stress and regulate their emotions.

Given the current shift in educational research, we must recognize that SEL must be prioritized. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) launched the Whole Child Initiative in 2007 to ensure that all children are healthy, safe, engaged in learning, supported by caring adults, and challenged academically. Educators must identify the systematic barriers that directly impact their students and collaborate to create an environment that empowers students to advocate for themselves and navigate systems that may directly impact their social, emotional, educational, and professional goals. Curriculum development is critical in the successful implementation of initiatives incorporating effective, evidence-based teaching practices and instructional materials to ensure that each school district can select the resources that best meet its needs and circumstances.
Research Design & Questions

The researchers will provide a survey of 11 open-ended questions to participants in order to allow them to share their perspectives. The questions are as follows:

- Do you believe that SEL is effective in urban education? Why and for what reason?
- What is the significance of social-emotional learning for you and how does it impact your teaching strategies?
- Can you explain your perception of the role of social and emotional skills in your classroom?
- In your classroom, how do you prioritize relationships with students? Give examples.
- How do you continuously model social and emotional skills in the educational setting and your personal life?
- How do you actively pursue SEL research or incorporate SEL activities/strategies into your daily practices?
- Tell me about a significant experience that has influenced how you incorporate SEL practices.
- Can you discuss the professional development activities that have been implemented due to the implementation of SEL?
- Can you discuss the value of the professional development that was provided during the implementation of SEL?
- Can you discuss the resources that your principal has provided to
assist you with the development of a positive learning environment in your classroom?

- How does your content concretely develop social-emotional skills such as responsible decision-making and social awareness?
Participants

The population for this study will include ten middle school-certified teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators from one urban school district in St. Louis, Missouri. Using aggressive recruitment and retention practices, the district has intentionally worked to increase staff diversity to serve the predominantly African American student population. As a result, the certified teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators reflect the student body's racial composition. The teachers and staff have significant urban education experience. The average experience in an urban school setting is seven years and at least 30 hours of trauma-informed training professional development, 30 hours of culturally relevant curricular training, and 20 hours of restorative justice/practices training. All certified teachers, counselors, support staff, and administrators will be invited to participate in the survey to ensure that data is collected from all personnel in the entire school district (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

The sample will consist of purposive sampling. A purposive sample occurs when researchers use personal judgment and prior information to select a sample and provide the necessary data representative of the population (Fraenkel et al., 2019; Mertens, 2020). This study's type of purposive sample will be a total population sampling composed of all middle school teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff. When the researchers examine an “entire population that has one or more shared characteristics,” total population sampling occurs (Crossman, 2020, para. 7).
Data Collection and Instrumentation

Pending approval from the school district and the University of Missouri - Saint Louis (UMSL) Institutional Review Board, the research team will use a qualitative research design to gain in-depth insight into the growing need for social-emotional programs to be implemented in schools to prepare students to become contributors to their academic success. This research study will examine educator perceptions regarding the direct impact of social-emotional competence in relation to academic achievement and career success. Researchers will use the grounded theory methodology to analyze the data and interpret the perceptions and experiences of the study participants. This research will aid in identifying barriers to learning and determining SEL's impact on student academic achievement and career success. This study will also provide insight into the impact of academic, personal, and social challenges and develop an approach that leads to an effective resolution. The researchers will develop criteria that characterize the components of a high-poverty school district and subsequently request participation from educators using email outreach as a recruitment tool for those who meet the criteria. A brief description of the research and its purpose will be shared in the initial participation request. As potential participants express interest, researchers will send emails to share the logistics of the survey/study.

Email messages will be sent to fifteen certified sixth through eighth-grade teachers, the school counselor, and two administrators. This email will contain a letter of participation and an informed consent form. Potential volunteers will have two weeks to complete and return the participant consent form. Surveys will be distributed when volunteers confirm their participation in the research study and
consent forms are signed and returned. Responses to the survey questions will provide researchers with feedback regarding educators' perceptions of the effectiveness of the SEL program and the academic and postsecondary preparedness of the students. Subsequently, researchers will determine if SEL should be prioritized when educating this population of students to increase their chances of academic and career success.

Participants, whose pseudonyms will be identified, will be asked to complete 14 survey items using the Qualtrics platform. The respondents will also be instructed to use pseudonyms to refer to any staff members, students, and institutions mentioned in their responses on the survey and in any interviews. Participants will use their personal and professional experiences to respond to predetermined questions created by the researchers. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled with subjects if researchers feel more context is needed based on the survey responses. Any follow-up meetings will be recorded via Zoom to transcribe the information.

Although the study will maintain confidentiality, researchers will notate participants' names and contact information during recruitment and potentially record Zoom meetings for transcription. The notation and recording create a loss of confidentiality risk. Participants' names and contact information were not shared with anyone outside the research group to minimize this risk. All information will be stored within one storage drive that is only shared amongst researchers.
Data Analysis

The process of analyzing the collected data occurred in four phases. In phase one, the researchers disseminated a Qualtrics form to participants for completion. Researchers used a form to collect data to gather more detailed participant responses. With the ability to save responses and add more details later, participants could provide detailed responses to all the research questions with no time limit. Researchers felt that conducting timed interviews would have limited the participant's thought process and could have potentially changed the responses that were received.

The coding process will occur during phase two. Researchers will begin the process by conducting open coding of the transcription documents. Once open coding has concluded, the researchers will create a codebook within Google Sheets consisting of three main tabs: participants, focused codes, and themes. Each participant will have their own tab under the participants' tab. The researchers will create and input the open codes into the individual participant’s tab; they will condense the number of open codes by narrowing them down to approximately 17 focus codes. When the focus codes have been determined, they will be added to the focused codes tab of the sheet. The focus codes will subsequently be used to create the overall themes for the collected data. Under themes, the five major recurring words we find as commonalities between the findings will be listed as the five themes for the research study. Once the themes have been solidified, the researchers will create descriptions that will expand upon the themes. The descriptions of the themes will conclude phase two and propel the research analysis process into phase three.
Once the codebook is complete, the researchers will begin analyzing the finalized data. The analysis process will occur during phase three. The completed codebook will be used to create graphs and charts to visually represent the aggregated data. The codebook will contain all the data, which will be included in one Google Sheet. This will be beneficial if the researchers need to find information during any data collection and/or analysis stage.

The fourth and final phase of the data analysis process combines the collected data, graphs, and charts. All findings will be used to propose and support the researchers' suggestions to incorporate SEL into all educational curricula.

**Selected Themes**

The final chosen themes will connect to the findings from the open and focused coding process, the interview questions, and the research questions. Each selected theme will have its own subsection in the methodology section of the dissertation. The researchers will expand upon each theme and how it is defined for research purposes. This section will also detail how participant responses align with the themes.

**Criteria for Defining Improvement**

To track the progress and understand how SEL implementation can be better leveraged, student grades, matriculation, and institutional surveys will be evaluated to define improvement. The chosen concepts are quantifiable and can be easily monitored by educators.

**Grades**

Adding SEL to the curriculum and having a grading system already in place makes gauging student progress manageable. It allows educators to consistently track student
understanding of the lessons through homework, writing assignments, and/or periodic testing. This concept can track progress while avoiding redundancy, which minimizes the burden of curricular implementation of educators.

**Matriculation**

As students advance through their education, their matriculation could be monitored as another form of defining improvement. With there being a standard for successful completion, the ability and the approval to advance to the next education level would be contingent upon passing the SEL curriculum since it would be a part of the standard and curriculum.

**Institutional Survey**

Conducting routine surveys with students, parents, and educators helps to improve SEL implementation. Everyone involved could complete surveys to share their perceptions of the curriculum and its effectiveness. The survey findings could be used to provide insight into the progress of SEL implementation. They may yield suggestions for more opportunities and activity initiatives to be created within schools.
Connections of Actionable Knowledge

Summary of Intended Knowledge

The vital importance and fundamental need for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) becomes increasingly apparent to educators with each new generation of students. Schools across the country have implemented SEL curriculums based on the theory that the scope of education must broaden from an exclusively academic focus to one that includes the “whole” child (Mahoney, 2018). A substantial body of research has shown that social and emotional learning is critical for preparing students for college, their careers, and to be productive members of their community. In addition, the NEA (2017) reports that Neuroscience research suggests there is a direct correlation between emotions and a student’s ability to learn. Furthermore, the NEA suggests that SEL skills are as important as academic skills to student development and future success in and beyond school.

SEL helps students learn coping strategies to handle everyday challenges, control their frustration and anger, make friendships and social connections, compromise, resolve conflicts, and make safe and healthy decisions (Kendziora & Osher, 2016). Unaddressed aggression and anxiety can lead to risky behaviors and behavioral problems that could have detrimental effects on student success (NEA, 2017). When implementing SEL, the school setting is ideal because it offers greater access to students and provides a myriad of opportunities to practice interpersonal skills. O’Conner (2017) states that SEL is “the process by which children learn to understand and manage emotions, maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (p.1, 2017).

Students who are classified as part of a lower socioeconomic class
experience mental health issues at a much higher rate which could negatively affect their ability to excel in school. Prolonged exposure to poverty increases incidences of emotional dysregulation and mental disorders. These issues can manifest as depression, irritability, problems with focusing, and memory issues, and affect student attitudes towards school, peers, teachers, and other staff. In addition, research shows that youth from low-income urban communities are more vulnerable to community violence than those in middle-class, upper-class, or suburban environments. Students from impoverished areas often experience unresolved trauma due to physical and sexual abuse and domestic violence, causing lasting adverse effects. When these issues are not addressed, students may engage in precarious behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity, and acts of hostility toward peers (Dymnicki et al., 2013). Students taught SEL tools early have fewer conduct problems resulting in school discipline referrals due to disruptive classroom behavior, verbal and physical aggression, and bullying (Mahoney et al., 2018).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in six American children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 experience a mental health condition annually. This statistic emphasizes the need for teachers to be trained to assist students with social and emotional needs along with academic content. Educators must also demonstrate empathy and recognize that traditional learning may be negatively impacted if students do not receive social-emotional support. Students who lack SEL skills have trouble controlling their emotions, feelings, and behaviors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Students who struggle with mental health issues and do not learn coping skills or how to control
their emotions are more likely to underachieve, drop out, engage in negative self-talk, and engage in harmful behaviors (Cefai & Camilleri, 2015; Franklin et al., 2012; Whitley & Gooderham, 2015). An effective SEL program will help students overcome the disadvantages many students face and equip them with a quality education that could alter their lives. Dymnicki et al. suggest the more time students spend in school, the less time they have to participate in misconduct (2013). Effective SEL skills allow students to obtain a quality education, ensure they complete high school, pursue a higher degree, and compete for better-paying employment (Nikulina, Widom, & Caja, 2011).

According to the Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development (2019), almost one in five black/African American young adults aged 16 to 24 are neither in school nor employed. In addition, the report illuminated college readiness, early college programs, ACT scores, remedial education, progress & retention, and academic advancement. The results were consistent across the board; black students are statistically inferior to their counterparts academically. We also recognize that more attention should be placed on systemic racial injustices and zero-tolerance school policies and how they directly affect children's academic progress. When student behavior issues appear in urban schools, they are often addressed punitively. Student behavior disruptions in urban schools are often met with school systems that mimic the criminal justice system. Zero-tolerance policies allow school leaders to expel students on their first offense. Our goal is to reduce suspensions that have no bearing on improved behavior but instead foster critical thinking skills that lead to long-term success.
Research Organization

The introduction and review of literature explained the CASEL framework, its application for students and the community, and the potential negative impact on the community if it is not implemented. Chapter Two detailed the intended methodology and design for action for the research. This chapter presented the research design and questions, the criteria for selecting participants, the intended data collection procedure, and the data analysis process. The results of the findings will be presented in Chapter Three, and the dissertation will conclude with Chapter Four. The conclusion will detail a summary of all three previous chapters and a suggestion for future research and implementation from the researchers. This will be done by presenting a program design that describes a co-curriculum strategy for future implementation, explaining the decision for the co-curriculum strategy, and describing the dissemination process of the overall research.
Chapter Three: Actionable Knowledge

Introduction

Social and emotional learning (SEL) addresses the capacity to "perceive and deal with feelings, tackle issues, and layout and keep up with good associations with others" (Ragozzino et al., 2003). Teachers perceive the significance of SEL and what it means for the students (Hoffman, 2009). Incorporating SEL into educational systems benefits students both inside the classroom and beyond. Students acquire abilities that will assist with handling difficulties they will face. (Denham and Brown, 2010).

Although many current educational curriculum models do not require SEL, many students experience its impact as they enter the educational system (Oberle et al., 2014). According to Payton et al., the following competencies may impact how students behave in the classroom (2000). The ideas formed from the implementation of SEL could influence the understudy's scholastic exhibition and job after graduation. SEL is reflected in schools, everyday work, and relational peculiarities. Fruitful execution of the idea would improve comprehension. There has been abundant research to support SEL as an integral part of student success that extends beyond school. SEL helps students understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, empathize with others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). The five core competencies in SEL allow students to regulate their emotions, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, avoid engaging in risky behaviors, and make ethical and safe choices. Educators can address social, emotional, and
mental health barriers by helping students develop better SEL skills and creating a safe, caring, and well-managed learning environment that fosters positive decision-making and academic success (Dymnicki, Sambolt, Kidron, 2013). By providing students with SEL skills, they are equipped to overcome these challenges and achieve success throughout school and beyond.

SEL is an idea that was introduced in 1987 by instructors and specialists who deemed it necessary that the school system implement significant changes to improve the learning environment. Timothy Shriver and Dr. Roger P. Weissberg led this group (Our History, n.d.). Even though the school curriculum has evolved over time, SEL implementation has remained inconsistent.

A wheel that displays the five competencies of CASEL was created to enhance comprehension of the following concepts: mindfulness, self-administration, dependable navigation, relationship abilities, and social mindfulness. The homeroom, instructive establishments, and at-home emotionally supportive networks impact how well individuals comprehend the skills. Mindfulness is characterized as an inward reflection (Morin, 2011). This capability incorporates recognizing and pondering one's feelings, assets, shortcomings, and faith in oneself (Demink- Carthew et al., 2020).
Data Collection and Instrumentation

Researchers utilized five intentional methods to address the research questions and overall topic. Those methods included researching a well-known topic upon which to build, finding a robust pre-established framework, providing detailed information, and creating a program that explains the research study and highlights suggestions for improvements. When finalizing the desired topic of study, the researchers knew that selecting a topic that had already been established but had not yet been fully integrated into systems was ideal. As educators from diverse backgrounds, the researchers knew that research of a topic that impacts all levels of education was important. This is also reflected in the research questions used for this study. The questions were intentionally chosen during the data collection process to increase participation and support and highlight the participants' and researchers' feelings about the topic. They also desired a thought-provoking experience for the participants. This strategy worked well for the researchers because participants provided concise responses and felt so strongly about the topic and the questions asked.

Some research questions were formed to address the CASEL Framework directly, which was used to guide the overall research study. This provided researchers with direct feedback from educators, counselors, and administrators who are actively working in the field and can explain how the CASEL Framework directly impacts their jobs and the lives of their students. The responses helped the researchers to develop a program that could be used in any school or classroom to increase the development of students of all ages and grade levels. The data also helped the researchers to create some suggestions for improvements that will be detailed in the program and the dissemination process.
The survey for this study focused on the impact of social-emotional learning (SEL) competence for academic achievement and career success within urban school settings; the practices that were monitored and evaluated address various aspects of the implementation and impact of the SEL program. The researchers developed some key considerations to ensure that the survey achieved this objective; they were as follows:

**Curriculum Adoption and Integration:**

- Process of Adoption: How did the district decide to adopt the SEL curriculum: i.e., administrative decision, teacher input, and community involvement?
- Integration into Existing Curriculum: How was the SEL curriculum integrated across all subjects and grade levels?

**Teacher Preparation and Professional Development:**

- Training Programs: What is the experience level of the teachers and staff in an urban school setting?
- Professional Development Opportunities: Explore the extent of the professional development opportunities used to support teachers in effectively incorporating SEL into their teaching practices.

**Classroom Practices:**

- Implementation Strategies: Investigate teachers' specific strategies and techniques to incorporate SEL into their daily lessons.
- Frequency of SEL Activities: Evaluate how often teachers engage students in SEL-related activities and discussions.

**Assessment and Measurement Tools:**
• Evaluation Methods: Explore the tools and methods used to assess students' social and emotional development within the SEL curriculum.

• Data Collection Processes: Assess how data on student outcomes are collected, analyzed, and used for continuous improvement.

Student Outcomes:

• Behavioral Changes: Evaluate observable changes in student behavior, interpersonal skills, and emotional regulation attributed to SEL integration.

• Academic Performance: Investigate whether there is any correlation between SEL integration and academic performance.

• Student Well-being: Assess the impact of SEL on students' overall well-being, including mental health and social connections.

Parental and Community Involvement:

• Communication and Awareness: Assess how the school communicates information about SEL to families and the community.

• Family Engagement: Explore the level of family involvement in supporting and reinforcing SEL concepts at home.

School Climate and Culture:

• Perceptions of School Climate: Evaluate how SEL integration contributes to the overall school climate and culture.

• Peer Relationships: Investigate the impact of SEL on peer
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relationships and the creation of a positive and inclusive school environment.

**Barriers and Facilitators:**

- Challenges: Identify challenges faced by educators and administrators in implementing SEL, such as time constraints, resource limitations, or resistance.
- Facilitators of Implementation: Explore factors that facilitate successful SEL integration, such as administrative support, teacher collaboration, or community partnerships.

**Long-Term Impact:**

- Gradual Progression: Investigate how SEL skills develop over time as students progress through different grade levels.
- Alumni Perspectives: Gather feedback from former students to understand the long-term impact of SEL on their lives.

**Stakeholder Collaboration:**

- Collaboration Among Stakeholders: Explore the extent to which teachers, administrators, families, and students collaborate in the implementation and evaluation of SEL.

**Policy Alignment:**

- Alignment with Policies: Examine how SEL integration aligns with educational policies at the district and state levels.

The researchers monitor and evaluate these practices to obtain the effectiveness of SEL curriculum integration, potential areas for improvement, and the overall impact.
on students, teachers, and the school community.

**Data Analysis**

**Research Questions**

**RQ1:** In an urban education classroom, how do teachers teach social and emotional skills? This research question seeks to understand the specific strategies and approaches utilized by educators to integrate social and emotional learning (SEL) into their teaching practices within urban education settings.

Alignment with Results:
The responses suggest that educators in urban education prioritize relationships with students, actively pursue SEL research, and incorporate SEL activities and strategies into their daily practices. These include providing examples of modeling social and emotional skills, creating a positive learning environment, and emphasizing the importance of SEL in addressing the challenges faced by students.

**RQ2:** Is students' academic progress directly impacted by their understanding of social and emotional learning? This research question indirectly supports the interview questions provided to the participants. While none of the responses explicitly state that academic progress is directly impacted by student understanding of social and emotional learning (SEL), responses imply the connection between SEL and academic success.

Alignment with Results:
The results indicate that academic progress is positively impacted by social and emotional learning. The responses highlight the role of SEL in helping students regulate emotions, make responsible decisions, and improve overall well-being,
contributing to academic success.

**RQ3:** Do students who have not been exposed to SEL feel confident to pursue post-secondary options? This research question indirectly supports the interview questions that participants answered. Participant responses do not explicitly address whether students who have not been exposed to social and emotional learning (SEL) feel confident pursue post-secondary options, but three themes emerge from this specific question: Effective implementation of SEL, Importance of SEL in Education and Integration of SEL into teaching practices.

**Alignment with Results:**
While the direct perspective of students who have not been exposed to SEL is not explicitly presented in the responses, the participants recognize the importance of SEL and its impact on the development of students’ confidence, self-advocacy, and decision-making skills. The participants believe that SEL contributes to students' overall confidence, which can extend to pursuing post-secondary options.

**RQ4:** Of the five SEL competencies, which competency needs to be prioritized for the population of students who will be included in the research? This research question prompted participants to consider which specific Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) competency is most essential for the population of students in urban education settings.

**Alignment with Results:**
The specific mention of prioritizing a particular SEL competency is not explicitly addressed in the Qualtrics responses. Stakeholders emphasize the importance of various social and emotional learning competencies, such as self-awareness,
responsible decisions making, and social awareness. The responses advocate for
a holistic approach to SEL, rather than prioritizing a single competency.

**Data Analysis Process**

The data analysis process comprises four phases that demonstrate how Social
and Emotional Learning (SEL) is integrated into educational curriculums.
During the initial phase, researchers utilized Qualtrics forms for participant
data collection. The coding phase is the second phase that involves open
coding of transcription documents, which culminated in the creation of a
detailed codebook in Google Sheets to include participants, focused codes, and
themes. These themes, derived from condensed focus codes, will be further
described to construct the subsequent analysis.

The third phase involved utilizing the comprehensive codebook to analyze data
and create visual representations including graphs and charts.

The final phase integrates all collected data, graphs, and charts to support
the researchers' proposition of integrating SEL into all educational curricula.
Selected themes, aligned with coding and research questions, will be detailed in the
methodology section, providing an in-depth understanding.

Criteria for defining improvement include tracking student progress
through grades, linking matriculation to SEL curriculum success, and conducting
routine institutional surveys involving educators, students, and parents to gauge
the effectiveness of SEL implementation on a broader scale.

**Emergent Themes**

Participant responses to Research Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 were compiled from
the eleven interview questions listed below:
1. Do you believe that SEL is effective in urban education? Why and for what reason?

2. What is the significance of social-emotional learning for you, and how does it impact your teaching strategies?

3. Can you explain your perception of the role of social and emotional skills in your classroom?

4. In your classroom, how do you prioritize relationships with students? Give examples.

5. How do you continuously model social and emotional skills in the educational setting and your personal life? Provide examples that are derived from both instructional and non-instructional settings.

6. How do you actively pursue SEL research or incorporate SEL activities/strategies into your daily practices?

7. Tell me about a significant experience that has influenced how you incorporate SEL practices.

8. Can you discuss the professional development activities that have been implemented due to the implementation of SEL?

9. Can you discuss the value of the professional development that was provided during the implementation of SEL?

10. Can you discuss the resources that your principal has provided to assist you with developing a positive learning environment in your classroom?

11. How does your content concretely develop social-emotional skills such as responsible decision-making and social awareness?
Based on the participant responses, the researchers were able to identify 9 common themes relevant to social-emotional learning (SEL) in education. The following themes recurred throughout the study's findings and have been identified as beneficial; together, they provided insights into different aspects of social-emotional learning and its influence on education. They emphasize the importance of integrating social-emotional learning to support the overall growth and well-being of all students.

**Theme 1. Importance of SEL in Education:** This theme was identified because several participants emphasized the critical role of social-emotional learning (SEL) in education, highlighting its importance for students' overall success and well-being. Participant 5, specifically stated the following:

"Social-emotional learning is vital to my role as an educator. Meeting the social-emotional and mental needs of students as well as ensuring their holistic wellness is essential to their overall success" (Participant 5, personal communication, September 7, 2023). “Social-emotional learning in my opinion, relates to providing students with a balanced curriculum that includes social-emotional growth.” (Participant 2, personal communication, September 20, 2023).

**Theme 2. Integration of SEL into Teaching Practices:** This theme emerged from participants' explanations of how they incorporate SEL into their teaching practices, including strategies to address students' social and emotional needs and academic instruction. Participant 3 stated: "To teach a student, you have to reach the student. You must unpack where they are relative to their social-emotional growth and support their development to engage them in the teaching and learning process" (Participant 3, personal communication, September 22, 2023).
Theme 3. Building Positive Relationships: Participants mentioned the significance of fostering positive relationships with students as a key aspect of SEL implementation. This theme underscores the importance of trust and rapport when supporting students’ social-emotional development.

Participant 1 stated:
"Relationships with students are prioritized the same. It is important to know each student served in an effort to communicate with them in a personalized manner that allows for appropriate acquiescence and mutual respect. Meeting students where they are is essential to being able to teach them. If they know the educator cares, students are more prone to meet expectations than not" (Participant 1, personal communication, September 30, 2023).

Theme 4. Professional Development and Training: Participants discussed the need for ongoing professional development and training to support effective SEL implementation. This theme highlights the importance of educator training and effective resources to enhance SEL practices. Participant 8 states:
"Frequently attending professional developments that address the need for SEL activities and strategies, articles, professional educator groups, and SEL curriculum" (Participant 8, personal communication, September 5, 2023).

Theme 5. Effective Implementation and Impact of SEL: This theme reflects participant views as they relate to the effectiveness of SEL in education, particularly in urban settings which emphasizes the potential to address students’ unique challenges on how SEL can impact student academic performance, behavior, and overall well-being. Participant 1 and Participant 8 states: "SEL is effective and necessary in urban education as we aim to teach students to be
advocates for themselves and for their communities" (Participant 1, personal communication, October 2, 2023).

"I believe SEL is effective in urban education because it is not only intended to help students cope with real-world problems and succeed in school but to also assist students with navigating self-management skills. SEL benefits students long-term in and out of the classroom, which contributes to their overall success and development (Participant 8, personal communication, October 10, 2023).

**Theme 6. SEL Skills and Competencies:** This theme relates to participant discussions regarding specific social-emotional skills and competencies that are developed through the use of SEL practices, such as responsible decision-making, self-awareness, and empathy.

Participant 6 states:

“My content develops students’ awareness of their own unique journeys and paths after high school. As an advisor, I facilitate opportunities to assess their own skills through personality tests and interest surveys, which will naturally proffer individualized results. With this knowledge, students can begin to see and accept the differences in others by first recognizing differences between themselves and their friends” (Participant 6, personal communication, September 3, 2023).

**Theme 7. Promoting Equity and Inclusion:** Participants highlighted how SEL can promote equity and inclusion in education by addressing the diverse needs of students and creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all.

Participant 10 states:

“SEL is an effective practice to have in place especially in urban education as the
demographic requires a school system with intentional strategies for developing healthier students and staff. In doing so, you improve student teacher relationships, teach positive communication and coping skills, and effective stress management” (Participant 10, personal communication, October 10, 2023).

**Theme 8. Trauma-Informed Practices**: Some participants referenced trauma-informed practices within the context of SEL which emphasize the importance of recognizing and addressing trauma-related issues to support students’ social-emotional well-being.

Participant 5 states:

“Professional development and training must emphasize social-emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellness, mindfulness, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive teaching. Such training should be intentional, ongoing, interactive, and filled with courageous conversations” (Participant 5, personal communication, October 1, 2023).

**Theme 9. Behavior Management and Discipline**: This theme emerged from those participants who discussed the role of SEL related to behavior management and discipline, emphasizing how SEL practices can prevent negative behaviors and promote positive social interactions among students.

Participant 2 states:

"Social and emotional skills play a vital role in the classroom. If students have underdeveloped skill sets, a lot of individual time is spent socializing the student according to expectations. This in turn can hinder the instructional process, potentially causing a learning loss for other students. Teachers with a solid
classroom management plan have immediate interventions in place to counter undesirable behavior. The ultimate goal is to reach all students and provide them with an equitable, positive classroom experience” (Participant 2, personal communication, September 23, 2023).

These themes represent the many viewpoints and experiences offered regarding the implementation and effect of SEL in educational settings. The participants’ responses indicate building meaningful connections, supporting students' holistic development, and providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. Educators acknowledged the need for continued professional development and training to successfully incorporate SEL into their teaching methods, recognizing its potential to improve students' academic achievement and general well-being. In addition, participants acknowledged SEL's success in urban education, highlighting its ability to address specific problems that urban kids confront while also promoting fairness, inclusiveness, and trauma-informed approaches. Educators use SEL to build critical abilities such as responsible decision-making, self-awareness, and empathy, providing students with the tools that they need to effectively navigate both academic and real-world obstacles.
### Research Questions and Themes

<table>
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<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Emerged Themes</th>
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| In an urban education classroom, how do teachers implement social and emotional skills? | • Importance of SEL in Education  
• Integration of SEL into Teaching Practices  
• Building Positive Relationships  
• Professional Development and Training  
• Effective Implementation and impact of SEL  
• SEL Skills and Competencies  
• Promoting Equity and Inclusion  
• Trauma-Informed Practices  
• Behavior Management and Discipline |
| Is the academic progress of students directly impacted by their understanding of social and emotional learning? | • Importance of SEL in Education  
• Integration of SEL into Teaching Practices  
• Effective Implementation of SEL  
• SEL Skills and Competencies |
| Do students who have not been exposed to SEL feel confident in their pursuit of post-secondary options? | • Importance of SEL in Education  
• Integration of SEL into Teaching Practices  
• Building Positive Relationships  
• Behavior Management and Discipline |
| Of the five SEL competencies, which competency needs to be prioritized for the population of students who will be the subjects of this research? | • Importance of SEL in Education  
• Integration of SEL into Teaching Practices  
• Effective Implementation and Impact of SEL  
• SEL Skills and Competencies  
• Promoting Equity and Inclusion |
Criteria Used to Define Improvement

The researchers used data from the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Assessments to determine if improvement was accomplished at an urban school. The English Language Arts and Math MAP assessment results yield information on achievement at the student, class, school, district, and state levels. The MAP Test results from 2017-2022 indicated that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) positively impacts student achievement. When the school was assigned Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) status at the end of the 2017-2018 school year under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) due to low academic performance, a schoolwide SEL curriculum was implemented. As a result, students showed steady academic growth from 2017-2019 on the MAP assessment. Grade 8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Grades 6-8 Math scores were particularly strong. In the “Percentage of State Mean” (PSOM) measure 2019, Grades 6-8 scored 79% PSOM in ELA and 74% PSOM in Math, closing the gap between ELA and Math performance relative to the state. Student MAP scores continued to rise each year through 2022 post-SEL implementation.

The STAR test results were also used to gain more explicit data. STAR scores compare students’ performances over time and across grades. The data showed that each quarter, student Math and Reading grades improved in all grade levels. From 2019 to 2022, students continued to show academic growth, and the school was removed from CSI status in May 2023. Furthermore, school culture and climate also improved after SEL implementation. SEL supported systems decreased school suspension rates by 65% and increased student attendance by 9% from 2019 –
2023. Additionally, the district experienced a 15% increase in parent engagement. Therefore, 85% of parents/families engaged with the district at least 3 times per quarter or six times per semester than in previous years. While SEL generally requires 4-5 years to yield significant results, the data revealed that the school’s assessment scores showed improvement after two years of implementation, and the researchers concluded that SEL positively impacts student success.

**Connections of Actionable Knowledge Reviewed**

The researchers focused their study on the effective implementation of a social-emotional learning curriculum in an urban education setting. They aimed to address the challenges faced by students and educators through the analysis of various perspectives and insights that were collected from educators, administrators, and stakeholders. They identified key areas for improvement and developed recommendations to enhance the SEL curriculum and its outcomes for all students.

Their focus lies not only on academic progress but also on nurturing positive relationships, promoting equity and inclusion, and providing trauma-informed support. Through collaboration, professional development, and increased investment in resources, the researchers aim to create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment that fosters the development of the whole child.

In this chapter, the results from the teacher and staff survey results were revealed. This qualitative study was designed to garner the perceptions of certified teachers and staff regarding the impact of social and emotional learning competence for academic achievement and career success within urban school systems. The research data revealed positive support for the implementation of
social and emotional learning curricula and/or classroom programs. The qualitative data also revealed that teachers believe in social and emotional development benefits. Several survey responses indicated that teachers could gauge their students’ social awareness, self-efficacy, and growth mindset abilities. Most participants agreed or strongly agreed regarding student ability to apply social and emotional learning skills for academic achievement and peer relationships. The data revealed commonalities among the educators. Ten themes also emerged. The themes included the importance of SEL education, integration of SEL into teaching practices, building positive relationships, professional development and training, effective implementation of SEL, the impact on urban education, SEL skills and competencies, promoting equity and inclusion, trauma-informed practices, and behavior management and discipline. The teachers emphasized the importance of schoolwide buy-in for a successful program. The survey data also suggested that students gain long-term benefits if social and emotional learning skills are developed across all grade levels. Chapter Four includes an overall summary of this study. The conclusions are supported by findings from the literature review. The implications for practice are addressed, and recommendations for future research regarding social and emotional learning are suggested. Finally, a dissemination plan recommendation is provided for the establishment and improvement of district-wide approaches for the implementation of a social and emotional learning curriculum/program.
Chapter Four: Dissemination for Improvement

In modern education, fostering the whole child's development goes beyond traditional academic instruction. As educators recognize the importance of addressing students' social and emotional needs and academic learning, they are increasingly prioritizing it (Durlak, 2011). The following dissemination report summarizes key findings and insights that were obtained from a thorough investigation of educator perspectives on SEL implementation in urban schools. A qualitative analysis of the responses provided by educators will serve to highlight the diverse strategies, challenges, and impacts associated with integrating SEL into teaching practices. This data will allow educational stakeholders, whether administrators, policymakers, or fellow educators, to gain valuable insight into SEL initiatives and foster more supportive and inclusive learning environments for students in urban schools.

According to the study findings, the effective implementation of social-emotional learning (SEL) techniques in urban education classrooms is a challenge. While there is an understanding of the relevance of SEL and efforts to include it in teaching techniques, there remain barriers to ensuring consistent and effective implementation. These challenges include inadequate resources, insufficient professional development and training, and a higher focus on specific SEL competencies that emphasize the needs of students in urban settings. In addition, there is a lack of understanding regarding the direct influence of SEL on student academic success and postsecondary choices, which emphasizes the need for additional research and evidence-based strategies to address these challenges.

The researchers propose the following recommendations to enhance the
integration of social-emotional learning in urban education classrooms. First, it is imperative to offer comprehensive and ongoing professional development opportunities to ensure that teachers can deepen their understanding of SEL competencies and effective implementation strategies. This could include workshops, seminars, and coaching sessions that emphasize the incorporation of SEL into teaching practices.

Secondly, prioritizing the cultivation of positive relationships with students is essential, emphasizing connection, empathy, and trust. Establishing a supportive classroom environment in which students feel valued and respected is crucial for their social-emotional growth. To strengthen relationships with students, educators must customize SEL practices to address the specific challenges urban students face.

Regular assessments should be conducted to evaluate the impact of SEL implementation on student academic progress and social-emotional development. With the strategic implementation of data-driven approaches, educators can identify areas in need of improvement and guide decision-making processes. Furthermore, fostering collaboration among educators, administrators, and stakeholders is vital for the creation of a cohesive approach to SEL implementation.

The data-driven approach provides researchers with quantitative results that are needed for future funding. It is crucial that stakeholders recognize the importance of investing in resources such as curriculum materials, training resources, and technology tools to support successful SEL initiatives. Adequate funding and staffing should be allocated to sustain SEL programs and nurture the well-being of students.
and educators. These recommendations are aimed at creating a more supportive and inclusive learning environment that nurtures the whole-child approach of students in urban education settings.

**Dissemination and Implementation**

To further educate and provide suggestions for improvements, researchers designed a program that details a course of action for the implementation of a co-curricular model that can be integrated into any curriculum at any school. Activities such as peer mentoring programs, community service projects, and leadership development courses will provide students with opportunities to strengthen social-emotional skills in an applied setting. Institutions would receive buy-in from teachers and staff if a co-curricular plan is developed to work in conjunction with the current curriculum. A co-curricular plan does not create a burden on teachers but instead highlights a collaborative approach amongst all staff to work together for the betterment of students. The goal of the suggested program is to serve as a supplement or enhancement for any institution's current curriculum while also creating a positive and supportive school climate that is critical for the success of SEL implementation. The program is disseminated in the form of a chart that lists in chronological order the steps that are necessary for successful SEL implementation. The program design can be found in Appendix I.

Based on the data that was collected during the study, there is evidence to justify the design of an effective social-emotional learning curriculum that is tailored for urban school districts. The positive outcomes observed, such as increased academic achievement, improved school climate, and enhanced student well-being, emphasize the necessity of integrating SEL into the educational
framework. For example, the findings indicate that schools that implement SEL initiatives experienced significant growth in student achievement, as evidenced by higher test scores and academic progress over time.

Additionally, the data revealed improvements in school culture and climate, including reduced disciplinary incidents and increased parent engagement, following the implementation of SEL practices. This highlights the importance of prioritizing SEL to address the diverse needs of students in urban settings, as socio-economic challenges and environmental stressors may impact their academic and socio-emotional development. The design of a comprehensive SEL program grounded in research-based strategies and tailored to the specific needs of our students, as provided by the research team, can create a supportive learning environment that promotes resilience, fosters positive relationships, and equips students with essential skills for success in school and beyond.

The dissemination and implementation plan of the research team highlighted the strategic approach for the dissemination of the research regarding the impact of SEL competence for academic achievement and career success within urban school systems. The plan was designed to effectively communicate research findings and offer suggestions for improvements to key stakeholders. The target audience included educators, administrators, policymakers, families, and researchers; the plan utilized various channels. Clear messages highlighted the dissertation's main findings, implications, and practical applications.

Findings were presented to TRIO - Student Support Services, Talent Search, and Upward Bound programs. TRIO is a federal outreach and student services program. These programs are designed to identify and provide services
for students in urban school settings and school boards of school districts in urban settings. A structured timeline was devised to ensure a systematic and timely release of short- and long-term information.

Metrics, including feedback mechanisms (i.e., surveys), were used to measure the impact of dissemination efforts. A system was established to document how research is utilized, providing valuable insights for future collaborations and academic recognition.

This summary encapsulates the essential components of the research team’s comprehensive SEL dissemination and implementation plan, which ensures strategic outreach and engagement with diverse stakeholders. The plan underscores the importance of a multifaceted and adaptive approach to disseminate research on the impact of SEL competence in urban schools, with the ultimate goal of enhancing academic achievement and fostering career success.
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Appendix A: CASEL Wheel
Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

May 26, 2023

Principal Investigator: Jamesha Purdiman
Department: Education
EDD-Doctorate

Your IRB Application to project entitled The Impact of Social-Emotional Competence on Academic Achievement and Career Success within Urban School Systems was reviewed and approved by the UMSL Institutional Review Board according to the terms and conditions described below:

IRB Project Number 2096604
IRB Review Number 392332
Initial Application Approval Date May 26, 2023
IRB Expiration Date May 26, 2024
Level of Review Exempt
Project Status Active - Exempt
Exempt Categories (Revised Common Rule) 45 CFR 46.104d(1)
Risk Level Minimal Risk

Approved Documents
informed_consent_for_participation.pdf
qualtrics_survey_questions.pdf
participant_request_email_script_1.pdf

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:

1. Enrollment and study related procedures must remain in compliance with the University of Missouri regulations related to interaction with human participants at https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/research/ch410/410.010_research_involving_humans_in_experiments.

2. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.

3. All changes must be IRB approved prior to implementation utilizing the Exempt Amendment Form.

4. The Annual Exempt Form must be submitted to the IRB for review and
approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date to keep the study active or to close it.

5. Maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date.

If you are offering subject payments and would like more information about research participant payments, please click here to view the UM Policy:
https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/policies/finance/payments_to_research_study_participants

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the UMSL IRB Office at 314-516-5972 or email to irb@umsl.edu.

Thank you,
UMSL Institutional Review Board
Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Email

Dear Middle School Educator,

You have been chosen to participate in a study investigating educators' perceptions of social-emotional competence and its impact on academic achievement and career success. Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw without penalty or repercussions.

The survey consists of eleven open-ended questions.

You may choose to answer some or all of the questions; however, if you decide not to answer some of the questions, we may not be able to complete the data analysis. No hazards are associated with your participation. The survey is anonymous in every way. Confidentiality is essential; your responses will be combined with other participants' responses and reported in summary format. The reported information will not identify individual participants or institutions. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate or respond to all items. Completing and submitting the survey indicates your agreement to participate and permission to use the information you provide for research.

Your only expense will be your time. This survey should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete.

Please contact us at UrbanBlueprintUMSL@gmail.com or our dissertation chair, Dr. Kenton Mershon, at krm923@umsl.edu, if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant or the study.

We appreciate your attention.

Sincerely,

Keesha Byrd
LaShanda R. Boone
Susan Grimes
Jamesha Purdiman
Cierra Wourman

Doctoral Candidates at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
Appendix D: Informed Consent Letter

Dear School Educator,

Thank you for electing to participate in our study that seeks to investigate educators' perceptions of social-emotional learning and competence and its impact on academic achievement and career success. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw without penalty or repercussion at any time.

Your only expense will be your time. This survey should take at most 45 minutes and will consist of 14 questions.

You may choose to answer some or all of the questions; however, if you decide not to answer some of the questions, we may not be able to complete the data analysis. The survey will not ask for your name; your confidentiality is essential. You will need to use pseudonyms if you elect to share an experience regarding anything or anyone specifically. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate or respond to all items. Completing and submitting the survey indicates your agreement to participate and grants the researchers permission to use the information you provide for research.

After completing and submitting the survey, researchers may request that you participate in a Zoom interview meeting to further expand upon some or all of your responses. This process will occur on an as-needed basis. The Zoom meeting will be recorded for the sole purpose of transcribing the meeting for research data.

We ask that you maintain confidentiality for all institutions, staff, and students. You must use a pseudonym to identify yourself, others, and/or institutions.

Please contact us at jlpchr@umsl.edu or our dissertation chair, Dr. Kenton Mershon, at krm923@umsl.edu if you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant or about the study.

We appreciate your attention.

Sincerely,

Keesha Byrd, LaShanda R. Boone, Susan Grimes, Jamesha Purdiman, and Cierra Wourman

Doctoral Candidates at the University of Missouri-St. Louis
Appendix E: Participant Demographics

**Institutional Role**

- Administrator: 60.0%
- Teacher: 30.0%
- Counselor: 10.0%

**Race of Participants**

- Black or African American: 80%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0%
- White: 20%
Appendix F: Interview Protocol

1. Institutional Role
   - Administrator
   - Counselor
   - Teacher

2. Race
   - American Indian or Alaska Native
   - Asian
   - Black or African American
   - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   - White

3. Sex
   - Female
   - Male
   - Non-Binary / Third Gender
   - Prefer Not to Disclose

4. Where and how did you learn about social-emotional learning? Please be as detailed as possible.

5. What does social-emotional learning mean to you and your teaching style? Please be as detailed as possible.

6. How do you see social and emotional skills playing a role in your classroom? Please provide examples.

7. In your classroom, how do you prioritize relationships with students? Please provide examples.

8. In and out of the classroom, how do you continuously model social and emotional skills? Please provide examples from both instructional and non-instructional settings.

9. How do you actively pursue SEL research or incorporate SEL activities/strategies into your daily practices? Please provide examples.

10. Please share a significant experience that has influenced how you incorporate SEL practices and provide examples.

11. What does professional development and training look like to you when thinking about SEL implementation? Please be as detailed as possible.
12. What resources have your institutional leaders provided to assist you in developing a positive learning environment in your classroom? Please provide examples.

13. How does your content concretely develop social-emotional skills such as responsible decision-making, social awareness, etc.? Please provide examples.

14. Do you believe that SEL is effective in urban education? Why and for what reason?
### Appendix G: Research Questions and Responses

**Research Question 1. Do you believe that SEL is effective in urban education?**

**Why and for what reason?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>SEL is effective and necessary in urban education as we aim to teach students to be advocates for themselves and for their communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>It is absolutely effective for urban schools when the initiative is supported by the district and implemented with fidelity on all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Yes. Many students in urban districts come to school with a myriad of challenges that many students in suburban districts are not knowledgeable about. Students need time to regulate, process, and oftentimes discuss those issues before teaching and learning can begin. By incorporating SEL, students learn the skills to do the &quot;emotional work&quot; on their own. They understand how their emotional well-being impacts their academic growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I can't speak to the effectiveness of it in urban education, but I know that it is needed in urban education because these students are afflicted with more trauma and need viable ways to process it in order to be productive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I absolutely believe that SEL is effective in urban education because I have seen the positive results firsthand when educators invest and pour all of themselves into dynamic, young minds despite the obstacles they may face. When students see a teacher and/or administrator coming back every single day, believing steadfastly and sowing bountifully into their lives, they will rise to the occasion in time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Yes. Students and teachers in urban education face greater challenges related to exclusionary discipline practices, limited resources, and bias perceptions. For this reason, SEL can benefit both teachers and students, encouraging social justice practices, accountability, social awareness, and authenticity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Yes. Not only does SEL improve students' academic level in urban education but also it improves their quality of life. As they continue to grow it aims to boost students' ability to make responsible decisions and regulate their own emotions and behaviors. I believe a large number of students in urban education are not taught these skills at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I believe SEL is effective in urban education because it is not only intended to help students cope with real-world problems and succeed in school but to also assist students with navigating self-management skills. SEL benefits students' long term in and out of the classroom which contributes to their overall success and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education because the students are able to fully succeed in the classroom with positive interactions with their teachers and peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>SEL is an effective practice to have in place especially in urban education, as the demographic requires a school system with intentional strategies for developing healthier students and staff. In doing so, you improve student teacher relationships, teach positive communication and coping skills, and effective stress management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2. Where and how did you learn about social-emotional learning? Please be as detailed as possible.

Participant | Responses:
---|---
1. Social-emotional learning was presented to me during my tenure as a middle school principal. The language at the time centered around character education and development. Working with at-risk youth and trauma-informed practices were the buzzwords.
2. I learned about social-emotional learning as an administrator over middle schoolers. The counselor was required to facilitate a variety of lessons to students in an effort to ensure their emotional stability. Classes included safe internet interactions, bullying, interpersonal skills, self-esteem, suicide prevention, trauma-informed care, etc.
3. I was introduced to the construct of social-emotional learning roughly six to seven years ago during a professional development session at the school where I was employed.
4. I learned about social-emotional learning through teacher training.
5. I learned about social-emotional learning when the school district where I was working at the time implemented a social-emotional learning assessment tool for K-12 students.
6. UMSL’s education program emphasizes social-emotional learning, its importance, and its impact throughout most of their courses.
7. I first learned about social-emotional learning when I started working at a middle school.
8. I learned about social-emotional learning during my professional career as an administrator in higher education. I took a deeper dive into social-emotional learning while working in the middle school setting. Social-emotional learning was emphasized and implemented in both settings to address students' needs beyond academia to increase students' success.
9. I learned about social-emotional learning while being enrolled in my graduate studies course.
10. The connection was made to social-emotional learning during the pandemic in education. However, it is a term and practice that I have been familiar with for the past 25 years.
Research Question 3. What does social-emotional learning mean to you and your teaching style? Please be as detailed as possible.

Participant | Responses:
--- | ---
1. Social-emotional means having a consistent framework of implementation that aims to teach students effective decision-making skills for their betterment. It equips students with a true understanding of how their choices and decisions impact their lives and the lives around them. It is presenting opportunities for students to engage and connect with other members of their peer group and society in a productive manner. It teaches accountability and how to model good citizenship.
2. Social-emotional learning in my opinion, relates to providing students with a balanced curriculum that includes social-emotional growth. It is implementing a skill set at different intervals to students that generates thought processes around thinking before doing. It allows them to be accountable for their choices and decisions, not only in their life but others around them. It is a holistic approach to teaching core values that build character and empathy.
3. To teach a student, you have to reach the student. You must unpack where they are relative to their social-emotional growth and support their development to engage them in the teaching and learning process.
4. It means including those social and emotional ideas into the learning plan and paying attention to student behaviors when having conversations.
5. Social-emotional learning is vital to my role as an educator. Meeting the social-emotional and mental needs of students as well as ensuring their holistic wellness are essential to their overall success.
6. Social-emotional learning is the incorporation of social and emotional skills within the school building’s culture and climate, as well as within classroom curricula. Within the classroom, this means that I am intentional about having students practice and reflect on self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
7. Social-emotional learning to me, is a process of developing self-control, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness.
8. Social-emotional learning is a proactive strategy to minimize the obstacles that prevent students from being successful in the learning environment.
9. To me, it means that every student learns in different ways and should have the ability to self-regulate their emotions. In my teaching style, I allow my students to process their emotions and interact with their peers.
10. Social-emotional learning equates to meeting the needs of the whole child in order to assist them in being successful in the educational environment. It is tapping into the "why" of behavior decisions in an effort to provide students with a positive experience and resources needed to overcome obstacles and potential barriers to success.
Research Question 4. How do you see social and emotional skills playing a role in your classroom? Please provide examples.

Participant | Responses:
--- | ---
1. | Social-emotional skills in the classroom reflect taught procedures and expectations. It is teaching from a universal standpoint that allows student input so the procedures and expectations are well understood and held by all.
2. | Social and emotional skills play a vital role in the classroom. If students have underdeveloped skill sets, a lot of individual time is spent socializing the student according to expectations. This, in turn, can hinder the instructional process potentially causing a learning loss for other students. Teachers with a solid classroom management plan, have immediate interventions in place to counter undesirable behavior. The ultimate goal is to reach all students and provide them with an equitable, positive classroom experience.
3. | Social-emotional development or learning constructs work in tandem with the academic concepts I introduce in my classroom.
4. | Those students with higher social and emotional intelligence are able to make the necessary adjustments so they do not become a distraction in the classroom.
5. | Social and emotional skills play a role in the classroom by deepening the bond between teacher and student and building trust. A 2022 University of Missouri study found that students who perceive that their teachers care for them receive high-quality teaching. I remember an instance when one of my colleagues spoke negatively about the potential of a student who performed well in my classroom. I strongly believe that the discrepancy in the student's performance had to do with the time that I had taken to develop a strong relationship with her despite the challenges she faced always reminding her that she had everything within she needed to succeed.
6. | Social and emotional skills not only enable individuals to better cope with everyday challenges, but also help them succeed academically, professionally, and socially. For example, modeling for students how to respond to challenges with their peers can make the environment a safer place to learn and make mistakes. Additionally, teaching students how to communicate effectively and with empathy will equip students with the tools necessary to advocate for themselves and build relationships in both personal and professional settings. Outside my classroom, I had a bulletin board that encouraged students to pull out a strip of paper and complete the "random act of kindness" it was named.
7. | They help improve academics, reduce negative social behaviors like bullying, and create positive classroom climates.
8. | As an administrator working with high school-age students, social and emotional skills play a role in the curricula provided to students by creating a safe and positive learning experience. For example, every morning my students begin their day with self-guided meditation which includes acknowledging how they are feeling and journaling about those feelings for 10 minutes. We have found this to be helpful for students who may have faced challenges while traveling to school and need to release emotions and properly organize their thoughts before diving into the learning process.
9. In my classroom, students are able to properly recognize their emotions in various ways and are provided with multiple avenues on how to regulate them. For example, when my students are feeling upset or overwhelmed, they are able to take a lap around the school to regroup and enter the classroom.

10. Examples in the classroom are centered on finding a level of alignment between home and school values that complement rather than collide. This is critical in urban education in the regard of teachers having a better understanding of the demographic served. Expectations for student’s academic and social outcomes should not be lowered because of socio-economic status but in fact, setting the bar to an achievable level gives students a hand up to further succeed in life. The effective teacher implements skills and strategies to aid students with stress management, time management, being resilient, and caring about others (empathy).
Research Question 5. In your classroom, how do you prioritize relationships with students? Please provide examples.

Participant | Resources:
--- | ---
1. Relationships with students are prioritized the same. It is important to know each student served in an effort to communicate with them in a personalized manner that allows for appropriate acquiescence and mutual respect. Meeting students where they are is essential to being able to teach them. If they know the educator cares, students are more prone to meet expectations than not.
2. All relationships with each student is a priority. Teaching is more than facilitating lessons. Teaching is about having a positive connection with students and families to yield high academic and social outcomes. In underserved communities, this practice is essential to teaching students. You must meet them where they are and build healthy relationships for their continual growth.
3. The relationships I develop with my students are of utmost importance. My students may not remember what I teach them, but they will remember how I treat them. How they interact with other adults, work through conflict, trust, advocate for themselves, etc. They learn in my classroom. My job as a teacher is more encompassing than just teaching them math.
4. Relationships with students are high on the list. They have to know that they have a safe space when they are at school in order to be their authentic selves. This allows them to be open to constructive development ideas.
5. I prioritize relationships with students by making room for their opinions to be heard and their interests reflected in both the planning and delivery of instruction. In this way, learning is relevant to them and is rooted in both their individual and collective interest. Some examples include taking the time to have meaningful conversations with them about what matters to them not only during class time but during unstructured times as well, attending their extra-curricular activities, and valuing their thoughts and opinions.
6. If a student is dealing with a problem, either at home or at school, that inhibits their ability to perform instructional tasks, then that is okay. I affirm their emotions by thanking them for letting me know and providing them with materials and arrangements to meet one-on-one later. I want students to know that their general wellness is the most important.
7. Spending individual time with each student and developing an interest in their interest. For example, if a student loves video games, take the time to learn about them. Another way to accomplish this would be to attend student events (like sporting games, spelling bees, etc) because when students feel supported, they become more confident.
8. In my program, I prioritize relationships with students by being intentional about engaging with each student individually to get to know them better. I think it’s important to learn more about the students and their backgrounds to determine how to best support and connect with them.
9. I prioritize relationships with students by having the students take personal interest surveys. I do this by using real-world applications and making the lessons relevant to the students. I make sure that everything I do as their teacher is in the best interest of the students.

10. All relationships with all students are a priority for increased development. Each student deserves to know they have adults before them that care about their well-being, their education, and their social-emotional development. Even when students and teachers have conflict and may not gel as easily as both would like, it's important to demonstrate respect, communicate expectations, and hold students accountable. It is equally as important for educators to self-reflect and have courageous conversations with peers regarding student relationships and how to improve and continually meet the needs of students.
Research Question 6. In and out of the classroom, how do you continuously model social and emotional skills? Please provide examples from both instructional and non-instructional settings.

Participant | Responses:
--- | ---
1. Displaying cooperation, trust, and empathy for others is an excellent way to model social and emotional skills. It is also being vulnerable and sharing of appropriate feelings at appropriate times. Students want to know their teachers are human and to provide them with your authentic self is a good way to model in instructional and non-instructional settings.
2. I model appropriate social and emotional skills by demonstrating respect for myself and others around me at all times. By serving as an advocate for students and families with each initiative. Being fair and consistent.
3. In my former district, SEL was taught across all subjects. It was infused throughout our day, from morning meetings to dismissal. It is how we approach our students' academic growth, their interpersonal relationships with their teachers and peers, support them in resolving conflicts, etc.
4. I try to model my social and emotional skills by trying to pay attention to how I feel and recognize how others are feeling. I also work on managing my emotions so that I can have good working relationships.
5. During instructional times, thinking out loud is a good method of modeling social and emotional skills. Another is teaching the art of debate to help students understand myriad perspectives and articulate a point of view that they may not agree with personally. Thus, students learn how to agree to disagree respectfully. Likewise, restorative conversation questions can be utilized in both instructional and non-instructional settings to balance in times of conflict. In this way, students learn how to give and receive information in a constructive way that can result in healthy resolution and repair of harm.
6. I model social and emotional skills by being reflective in my practices. If I make a mistake, I am quick to acknowledge the mistake as a teachable moment. I have also been working on improving my work-life balance and self-care routines, such as setting aside time for physical activities and for family and friends.
7. I have children so I will use them as an example. I encourage them to try new things. I also encourage them to show their feelings and not to bottle them in. Also being a supportive person and creating that atmosphere in every setting.
8. Social and emotional skills can be continuously modeled in and out of the classroom by conducting emotional check-ins, words of encouragement, holding students accountable, and assisting them with looking at problems from a different angle throughout the day.
9. I model social and emotional skills by speaking confidently to myself and holding myself accountable for my actions at all times.
10. Implementing inclusive practices before students, models the importance of making everyone feel welcome with equal opportunities that enhance the educational experience. This can be done in the classroom and non-instructional settings. Everyone has a role. Everyone should be included and is somebody!
Research Question 7. How do you actively pursue SEL research or incorporate SEL activities/strategies into your daily practices? Please provide examples.

Participant | Responses:

1. Continual professional development is essential to remaining abreast of current activities and strategies. Reading educational research articles/journals is also an important component to gaining more in-depth information and knowledge of the subject matter.

2. Reviewing educational journals to remain abreast of current research and incorporating those readings into PLC meetings with teachers to discuss best practices for student engagement.

3. Make SEL a part of the daily routine. This involves starting or ending with a brief mindfulness exercise, checking in on the emotional well-being of my students, colleagues, and administrators, and setting specific SEL goals.

4. I like to read so I find material that is relevant to the work that I am doing. I look for practical strategies and ideas that I can put into practice to see if there is any impact on the students I serve.

5. I actively incorporate SEL activities/strategies by staying abreast of the current research around the topic, such as familiarizing myself with the recent University of Missouri study and administering assessments that give students an opportunity to rate themselves and for teachers to rate their students on their social-emotional learning attributes.

6. Allowing time for talking and working with partners is a great way to build SEL skills related to communication and problem-solving. In my daily practice, I am always seeking ways to reflect on how I communicate with colleagues and students and increase my own social and emotional competence.

7. I take mindfulness breaks. If I find my mind being clouded with numerous things, I will stop and take a break from everything to regain my thoughts. I also practice self-care (like walking, yoga, Spa dates, etc).

8. Frequently attending professional developments that address the need for SEL activities and strategies, articles, professional educator groups, and SEL curriculum.

9. Attending conferences and studying different research allows me to incorporate SEL strategies and techniques in my classroom.

10. Staying knowledgeable on current SEL research and practices is critical for schools to provide teachers with the necessary tools to assist them in job performance. SEL activities and strategies can be discussed and taught during professional development and weekly PLCs. A school that has effective social-emotional practitioners is a school that is driven by the mission to help students. When staff are on one accord with regard to their approach to students and provide them with healthy classroom experiences, there should be a natural decrease in discipline and an increase in helping students think for themselves and make better choices.
THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Research Question 8. Please share a significant experience that has influenced how you incorporate SEL practices and provide examples.

Participant | Responses:

1. A significant experience that influenced how I incorporate SEL, involved having to lose a teacher in the middle of the school year. The teacher loss centered around the teacher being ill equipped to properly intervene and reduce challenging behaviors. The teacher knew her content and had an excellent instructional plan. However, she lacked the ability to connect with her students to understand the importance of incorporating SEL into her curriculum and classroom practices. This left her feeling overwhelmed and unheard. This example was a clear indication that teachers need direct support in the area of SEL alignment and implementation. Teachers not only need continual professional development on SEL, they need job-embedded support to ensure proper structures and routines are in place that continually allow students to model and practice SEL with their peers and adults.

2. A significant experience in which I am more intentional about incorporating SEL involved me as the administrator over students and teachers in an urban school and seeing a true need to develop teachers so they could better understand and serve students.

3. I have taught for more than fifteen years in urban school settings. I have attended various professional development opportunities and incorporated different teaching strategies into my curriculum to reach my students. Before working in a district that supported SEL across all subject areas, I struggled with student behavior, developing relationships with all my students, and even developing relationships with some of my peers. With SEL being a district-wide initiative at my former school, the teachers, staff, administration, and students modeled SEL skills in their behavior. As a result, I have been more willing to share who I am as a person and not just the “teacher” version of who I am with my students. I have seen emotional walls come down, and students open up and share their areas of challenge with a lesson. In doing so, they relate it to real-world experiences. My students have become more confident, compassionate, and kind. The incorporation of SEL in my school reignited my passion for teaching.

4. I have been influenced to use SEL practices when I saw students not able to make good and sound decisions. Students were more apt to act out of emotions which in most cases made the problem and outcome worse.
5. I remember an instance when I participated in conversations in which current teachers of students would share their experience with the teacher the students would have the next year. On this occasion, there was tremendous negativity shared about the poor behavior of various students and what the next teacher needed to brace him/herself to experience. While most teachers were feverishly taking notes, I chose not to do so because I wanted these students to have a clean slate and a fresh start with me. As a result, I welcomed them with an open mind and an open heart which resulted in one of the best teaching experiences of my life because I cultivated a safe haven in my classroom rooted in the belief that we are all MORE than the worst mistake we have ever made. Most importantly, students are intuitive and know when they are valued and cherished, which makes all the difference in their healing and efforts to consistently strive to be their best selves.

6. Last year, my sixth-grade students were negatively affected by a fight that had occurred between two of their classmates. They were unable to focus and expressed concerns for their peers. Rather than try to continue the lesson, we gathered and reflected on this experience in a community circle. This experience strengthened relationships with my students and within the classroom because it provided an opportunity to both listen and reflect on the incident.

7. Having children. It has required me to practice daily SEL not only for myself but for my children. When children have SEL incorporated into their lives young, it helps them navigate through the world better as they become adults. It's a daily practice that never ends but should start early on in a person's life.

8. During a professional development I once attended, the information shared regarding SEL assisted my eagerness to incorporate SEL practices. For example, the data provided showed an increase in students' success and a decrease in behavior challenges where SEL activities were incorporated into the learning environment.

9. A significant experience was when one of my students became very upset with another student and they wanted to fight their peers. I intervened and explained to the student that they can’t allow their emotions to influence their decisions. The student listed the consequences of their actions and what ways they could have made the situation better.

10. There is not one particular experience over the next that stands out for me more so than the importance of serving black and brown students with a level of emphatic intention geared toward their success. It is being fully committed to the work of education to provide students with resources and opportunities for them to succeed at their given stage and beyond. It is significant to believe that each child has the potential to achieve greatness and to not allow my or my peers' personal opinions to impede the work.
Research Question 9. What does professional development and training look like to you when thinking about SEL implementation? Please be as detailed as possible.

Participant | Responses:
--- | ---
1. A professional development plan that includes embedding SEL at all components of the educational framework for a school and/or district. Having the support of trainers to inspect the expectations and to provide non-evaluative timely feedback to teachers for continual improvement could also be helpful. I think books (or journal studies) that discuss research and best practices would be informative for implementation. Tools to measure the success of the program through quarterly surveys, review of survey feedback, and discussions during professional development are a few other ideas that would help with the implementation of SEL components for students.
2. Professional development should entail a deep dive into the curriculum with realistic implementation examples. A follow-up component that includes educators networking on the fidelity of the curriculum would best serve the quality of the professional development received.
3. Actively staying informed about the latest research, trends, and developments in the field of SEL. This involves reading books, research papers, and articles, and following reputable SEL organizations and experts on social media.
4. For me, professional development would look like active training and discussion around SEL topics. This would also include reviewing case studies and scenarios.
5. Professional development and training must emphasize social-emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical wellness, mindfulness, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive teaching. Such training should be intentional, ongoing, interactive, and filled with courageous conversations.
6. Professional development on SEL should include role-playing strategies. While I am terrible at this type of exercise, I think it is important to identify and discuss the common misconceptions that occur when trying to implement SEL strategies in the classroom and within the school. I also believe that this professional development session should conclude with a brainstorming activity, where staff collaborates on a plan to implement at least one agreed upon practice into their building.
7. A training that provides the competencies that adults need in order to manage stress and create a safe and supportive classroom environment. Educating adults with the skills and mindset needed to effectively embody, teach, and model SEL for students.
8. SEL should be an ongoing quality training to ensure it is effectively implemented.
9. I believe professional development should include scenarios and role-play of real situations that can involve SEL implementation.
10. SEL professional development should directly align with the mission of the district, and the comprehensive school improvement plan, correlate to the teacher evaluation system, and hold all stakeholders accountable for its success. SEL professional development extends beyond a sit-and-get-forget-about-it session. SEL is a purpose-driven mission that in order for it to be implemented to fidelity must be communicated through all channels consistently within a district.
Research Question 10. What resources have your institutional leaders provided to assist you in developing a positive learning environment in your classroom? Please provide examples.

Participant | Responses:
---|---
1. Sufficient planning time before and during the school year during PLCs is provided to teachers to effectively plan instruction with SEL alignment. Teachers are a resource to each other by completing classroom walks and providing peer feedback. Teachers each have a professional development outside of what is provided to continually grow and improve in their craft.
2. None in my current role at this time.
3. Along with implementing a district-wide SEL curriculum. As educators, we are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues and experts in the field. Share ideas, resources, and best practices to enhance our understanding of SEL and help develop effective strategies.
4. None.
5. Over the years, I have participated in courageous conversations about race, social justice training, trauma-informed training, and Sharokky Hollie's culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and learning.
6. Our institutional leaders provided us with weekly professional development to enhance our own understanding of SEL. We read “Causes and Cures in the Classroom,” and discussed how each chapter connects to our students and how we can provide them with support. We also set aside half a day to review and finalize a PBIS plan, which included tutorials and best practices for how to use Kickboard and a student behavior document.
7. All staff Professional development meetings w/ outside facilitators. (Opportunity for the entire staff to be educated together while team building) Also, incorporating self-care days into the school calendar gives staff an opportunity to care for themselves.
8. Curriculum resources and professional development and trainings
9. My leader incorporated a homeroom hour for the students to gain and understand a sense of community with peers that they may not interact with on a daily basis. During the homeroom, they are given different lessons to help them with self-reflection and regulations.
10. Resources would include providing teachers with a platform to courageously share their experience for the purpose of receiving feedback that is meant to improve their social-emotional skill set. This includes frequent classroom walk-thru by the administration, peers, and outside supporting agencies.
**Research Question 11.** How does your content concretely develop social-emotional skills such as responsible decision-making, social awareness, etc? Please provide examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>As an administrator, conducting myself in a personable yet professional manner in all instances is crucial for the modeling of expectations. Promoting dignity and respect for students, not only is the right approach, but is also a contagious approach for your staff to adopt. Doing so shapes the climate and culture of the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>As a counselor, I am required to assist students with responsible decision-making and social awareness skills. In doing so, it must be done without bias as to appropriately guide them toward doing what’s best for them in their life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Teach math. Math requires students to analyze problems, identify potential solutions, and decide the most appropriate strategies. This process of problem-solving encourages responsible decision-making. An example of that is, when faced with a complex word problem, students must decide which mathematical operations to use and how to organize their work to arrive at a solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The content from the class gives small pre-assessments to the students prior to going over the material. Then we discuss the material and use scenarios, in which the student comes up with ways to better problem solve or be more emotionally intelligent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>It provides social-emotional skills through analysis and debate of historical and current events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>My content develops students' awareness of their own unique journeys and paths after high school. As an advisor, I facilitate opportunities to assess their own skills through personality tests and interest surveys, which will naturally proffer individualized results. With this knowledge, students can begin to see and accept the differences in others by first recognizing the differences between themselves and their friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>When these skills are implemented, students show positive results, like taking accountability, less bullying, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Promoting positive behaviors and reducing unproductive behaviors aids students in responsible decision-making. It also emphasizes the importance of empathy and properly placing emotions, which in turn, helps students become more socially aware.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>While teaching math, students can become very upset if they do not understand the process on how to derive the answer to the question being asked. I always tell my students to be patient with me and themselves when learning a new math skill because a lot of the concepts take time to grasp. When my students are upset with the content, I always tell them to go back to the beginning and that it is ok to ask for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The alignment of SEL to relevant life experiences and discussing scenarios as they arise aids in better decision-making and social awareness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix H: Codebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1: Importance of SEL in Education</strong></td>
<td>This theme was identified because several participants emphasized the critical role of social-emotional learning (SEL) in education, highlighting its importance for students' overall success and well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2: Integration of SEL into Teaching Practices</strong></td>
<td>This theme emerged from participants discussing how they incorporate SEL into their teaching practices, including strategies for addressing students' social and emotional needs alongside academic instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3: Building Positive Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Relationship building was developed into a theme based on the fact that the majority of participants mentioned the significance of fostering positive relationships with students as a key aspect of SEL implementation without being prompted to do so. This theme underscores the importance of trust and rapport in supporting students' social-emotional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 4: Professional Development &amp; Training</strong></td>
<td>This theme was highlighted as participants discussed the need for ongoing professional development and training to support effective SEL implementation. This theme brings to light the importance of educators receiving training and resources to enhance their SEL practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 5: Effective Implementation and Impact of SEL</strong></td>
<td>This theme reflects participants' views on the effectiveness of SEL in education, particularly in urban settings, emphasizing its potential to address the unique challenges faced by students in urban settings and contribute to their success. Participants shared insights into how SEL can positively impact students' academic performance, behavior, and overall well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 6: SEL Skills and Competencies</strong></td>
<td>This theme was created because it heavily relates to participants' discussions about the specific social-emotional skills and competencies that are developed through SEL practices, such as responsible decision-making, self-awareness, and empathy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 7: Promoting Equity and Inclusion</strong></td>
<td>This theme around equity and inclusion came to be as participants highlighted how SEL could promote equity and inclusion in education by addressing the diverse needs of students and creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 8: Trauma-Informed Practices</strong></td>
<td>This theme derived from some participants referencing trauma-informed practices within the context of SEL, which emphasize the importance of recognizing and addressing trauma-related issues to support students' social-emotional well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 9: Behavior Management and Discipline</strong></td>
<td>This theme emerged from participants discussing the role of SEL in behavior management and discipline, emphasizing how SEL practices can help prevent negative behaviors and promote positive social interactions among students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Focused Code Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEL Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL in Teaching Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity and Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Well-Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is effective and needed in urban education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL could help teach students how to advocate for themselves and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about SEL as a middle school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent framework of implementation is vital for the success of SEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is about equipping students with the tools needed to make sound decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL presents opportunities for intentional socialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL teaches accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student input is needed for SEL implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are more likely to understand and uphold the procedures and expectations of SEL if they are able to contribute to the implementation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student communication and mutual respect is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students must be met where they are for better results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are more likely to meet expectations when they feel cared for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers need to show up as their authentic self in the classrooms to show students that they are human</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers must model the SEL competencies in order for students to follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continual professional development and staying updated on SEL initiatives is important staff development around SEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers need support from their jobs for successful SEL implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a school and district-wide framework should be taught in professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainers, consistent feedback, and tools to measure success is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers need sufficient planning time in order for SEL to be implemented successfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers must continually grow and develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being personable but professional is needed to model SEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# The Impact of Social-Emotional Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Codes</th>
<th>Focused Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>district support is crucial for success</td>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation of SEL on all levels</td>
<td>SEL Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about SEL as a middle school administrator</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL provides a balanced curriculum for students</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL teaches students accountability</td>
<td>SEL Skill Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL implementation is a holistic approach to build character and empathy in students</td>
<td>SEL Skill Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lack of SEL in one or a few students could cause a learning loss for all students</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a classroom management plan is beneficial for all teachers</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with students should be a priority</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and educators need to know their students and educate them on bettering themselves</td>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for self and others is needed to effectively model SEL</td>
<td>Modeled Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff professional development and educational readings should be consistent</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continual conversations around best practices for student engagement is necessary</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic implementation of SEL into curricula is important for professional development</td>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting educators feedback and perspectives for SEL implementation is vital</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators must work without bias for SEL implementation to be successful</td>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Codes</td>
<td>Focused Codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student internal regulation</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning to process emotions is important</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL teaches students how to regulate their emotions</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student well-being impacts academic growth</td>
<td>Supporting Well-Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about SEL during a professional development session put on by the employer</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL means meeting the student where they are at</td>
<td>Supportive Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In order for SEL to work, teachers must support student development and engage with students</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships with students is the most important part of an educator's role</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators' interactions with students are what the students remember</td>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL should be taught across all subjects</td>
<td>SEL Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL should be apart of the daily routine, both inside and outside of the classroom</td>
<td>SEL Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When SEL is a district-wide initiative, everyone takes part in its implementation and it yields greater results</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying informed within the field of education is important for continuous SEL success</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleague and expert collaboration on SEL initiatives is helpful and effective</td>
<td>SEL Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL can help anyone, on any level, and in any class</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Codes</td>
<td>Focused Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is needed in urban education</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from urban settings are at a higher risk to</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience different types of traumas</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students need to learn how to process their emotions</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>successfully processing emotions leads to an increase</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in productivity for the student</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about SEL through teacher trainings</td>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL means paying attention to student behaviors</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is successful when active and productive</td>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conversations take place between a student and their</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher or administrator</td>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with an understanding of SEL shows up</td>
<td>Modeled Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>differently in class and can be less of a distraction</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for their peers</td>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with students should be a priority</td>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive feedback better when they feel</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safe with you and know you are coming from a place</td>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of care and support</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to recognize one’s own emotions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as an educator and how it influences how the work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gets done and the connections among the staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading educational materials is important when</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>developing best implementation practices and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparing measurements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students are more likely to act impulsively and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not make good decisions when they have not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experienced SEL</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active training and continuous discussions around</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is needed for professional development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is helpful to review prior cases, studies, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scenarios in order to become knowledgeable on SEL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having short activities in class helps introduce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL to students in a digestable way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Codes</td>
<td>Focused Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL yields positive results</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educator investment is needed</td>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educators must pour themselves into students and put effort into the</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students like to feel supported by their teachers and administrators</td>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about SEL when the employer implemented a SEL assessment tool</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for K-12 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is vital to the work of an educator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For overall success, students must have their</td>
<td>SEL Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social-emotional and mental needs met</td>
<td>Supporting Well-Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building trust with students is needed for success</td>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive a higher quality teaching when they feel that their</td>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers care for them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having strong relationships with students impacts how they show up in</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing students to have an opinion on class initiatives keeps them</td>
<td>SEL Buy-In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interested and engaged with the lessons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative conversations helps students long term</td>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administering surveys to students to track SEL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding and success is helpful</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying informed on research both inside and outside of one's district</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is helpful for the continued success of SEL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who feel valued increases their efforts inside of the classroom</td>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional and ongoing training for educators and administrators will</td>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be vital for the longevity of SEL implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open Codes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focused Codes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student and teachers face greater challenges in urban education settings</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL encourages social justice practices, accountability, social awareness, and authenticity</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about SEL as a student at the University of Missouri - Saint Louis (UMSL)</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL needs to incorporated within the school's culture, climate, and curricula in order to be successful</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively teaching students the competencies of SEL is important</td>
<td>SEL Skill Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective communication and empathy are important tools for success</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL will benefit students academically, professionally, and socially</td>
<td>SEL Skill Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students home lives affect their presence in class</td>
<td>SEL Impaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting students general well-being is important</td>
<td>Supporting Well-Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As educators, it is important to model SEL</td>
<td>Modeled Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing students to talk through their emotions is needed to help them understand SEL and themselves</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-playing scenarios would be beneficial when training on SEL implementation</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a plan would help keep everyone on track when introducing SEL</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Open Codes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focused Codes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL improves academics and quality of life</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL impacts decision-making, emotional management, and behavior</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many students in urban education are not taught SEL at home</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about SEL while working at a middle-school</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL promotes developing self-control, interpersonal skills, and self awareness</td>
<td>SEL Skill Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL implementation could help reduce negative behaviors in students</td>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL understanding improves grades</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building relationships with students through individual conversations is important for successful SEL implementation</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging students to articulate and show their feelings is needed for them to understand SEL</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing SEL both inside and outside of the classroom yields better results</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training on SEL will be needed for teachers to be able to successfully introduce SEL into the classroom</td>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting all of the staff with outside experts would help with SEL implementation</td>
<td>SEL Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are only positive results from SEL implementation</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Codes</td>
<td>Focused Codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL helps students cope with real-world problems and succeed in school</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL has long-term benefits for students both inside and outside of the classroom</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL contributes to students’ overall success and development</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about SEL as an administrator in higher education</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed a better understanding of SEL when working with middle-school students</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL minimizes the obstacles that prevents student success</td>
<td>SEL Skill Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing ways for students organize their thoughts and feelings before starting class has shown great results</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with students individually helps to figure out their needs and how to connect with them</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting and checking in on the whole child is important for successful SEL implementation</td>
<td>Supporting Well-Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous training and education around SEL is needed for staff support</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A SEL curriculum that everyone understands and can follow would be ideal for SEL implementation</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies have shown that SEL implementation has positive outcomes in students and reduces negative behaviors</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting positive behavior in students helps them develop their social-emotional skills</td>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizing empathy and managing emotions improves students social awareness</td>
<td>Recognizing/Processing Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Open Codes</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive interactions with teacher and peers influences student success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learned about SEL during grad school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEL shows that students all learn in different ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students need to be allowed to process their emotions and interact with their peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing ways for students to be able to recognize and manage their emotions both inside and outside of the classroom is important</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having the students’ best interest in mind is the first step in relationship building</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability on all sides models SEL for everyone</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attending conferences and reviewing research is important for SEL implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having students recognize the consequences of their actions helps them to better understand SEL</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role-playing situations that pertain to SEL in the classroom could be helpful for SEL implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allowing opportunities for students to engage with their peers and learn about SEL initiatives would be beneficial</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching students patience has become a necessity for SEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Codes</td>
<td>Focused Codes</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL is effective in urban education</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban education requires intentional strategies for student and staff development</td>
<td>Urban Setting Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned more about SEL during the pandemic while working in education</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL means meeting the needs of the whole child for student success</td>
<td>Supporting Well-Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL taps into the &quot;why&quot; behind behaviors</td>
<td>Behavioral Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL provides resources to overcome the barriers and obstacles of student success</td>
<td>SEL Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An alignment of home and school values is important for students to see positive results</td>
<td>Supportive Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An understanding of what demographic of students that educators are teaching is important to establish needs</td>
<td>SEL Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with students is vital for their development</td>
<td>Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through solid relationships, courageous conversations can happen to address concerns from all sides</td>
<td>Student Trust and Rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone should be included when thinking about SEL implementation</td>
<td>SEL Buy-In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a school-wide mission that everyone understands is needed to ensure everyone is moving in one direction</td>
<td>SEL Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing SEL research and routine professional development on the topic of SEL will need to be a priority for successful implementation</td>
<td>Professional Development/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator's belief in and commitment to their students goes a long way</td>
<td>Educator Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for educators to provide feedback is needed to track the success of SEL implementation in the classroom</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability for everyone will need to be a requirement</td>
<td>SEL Implementation Tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix I: Program Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiatives (Chronological Order)</th>
<th>Goal(s)/Purpose</th>
<th>Task(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Professional Development**      | ● Ensure teachers and school staff know how to integrate programming into the current curriculum.  
                                    ● Provide ongoing support for teachers and staff throughout the integration. | ● Create a positive and supportive school culture  
                                                                 ○ Identify bias, push equity and inclusion  
                                                                 ● Share plan for SEL Co-Curriculum Implementation and the reason for the integration  
                                                                 ● Detail the support that will be available for everyone |
| **Needs Assessment**              | ● Determine what the current needs are within the classrooms.  
                                    ● Identify ways to improve the current curriculum. | ● Get feedback from all stakeholders on successes and challenges in the classroom |
| **Co – Curriculum Design**        | ● Foster students’ ability to collaborate with peers, effectively communicate, build resilience, and empathize with others.  
                                    ● Promote collaboration between all staff. | ● Create desired learning outcomes for students/participants  
                                                                 ● Develop activities that enrich students’ development |
| **Co-Curriculum Implementation**  | ● Co-Curriculum will need to be implemented into | Researchers’ Suggestions:  
                                                                 ● Peer Mentoring |
### THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

| existing content areas and curriculum | ● Community Service Projects
| | ● Development Workshops over SEL Competencies
| | ○ Self-Awareness
| | ○ Self-Management
| | ○ Responsible Decision-Making
| | ○ Relationship Skills
| | ○ Social Awareness |