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Social Emotional Learning and English Language Learners

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by
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Abstract

Social emotional learning (SEL) is a process of obtaining and effectually applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions in life for both children and adults. There are many challenges that English language learners (ELL) face in comparison to their English-speaking peers. ELLs have the challenges of learning a new language, culture, and academic and social-emotional skills. In this capstone I examine the overarching The research suggests that integrating SEL into the classroom curriculum and culture can support elementary students to better manage personal and collective behavior, to improve attendance rates, and to raise student achievement rates for ELLs. This capstone includes a professional development on SEL for teachers working with ELLs and mainstream students. The goals of the PD are to learn, understand, create and implement SEL activities. There is a great need for additional research on implementing SEL in classrooms with ELLs.

Keywords: English language learners; social emotional learning; elementary classroom

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

Put yourself in the shoes of an English language learner (ELL/ELLs). You are a 3rd grade student that just moved to the United States, trying to fit into a new school, and you have to do school work in a language you are just learning. Imagine having adult responsibilities in addition to dealing with trauma experienced in your home country. Cho et. al. (2017), reported that in addition to the challenges of learning new academic skills, ELL students also needed to acquire a range of social-emotional skills in the classroom. Therefore, ELLs may have social-emotional needs that are not being met when the focus is solely on academic instruction within the classroom. As an elementary school teacher, I often wonder; how can elementary teachers support the social-emotional needs of ELLs? Therefore, this capstone project will address the question. Since, all teachers are teachers of ELLs, all teachers need to understand the impact of social-emotional learning (SEL) on academic achievement and how to best support students within the classroom.

Significance of the Problem

There is a range of social-emotional skills that many ELLs need to develop when coming to the United States. To name a few, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness. According to Cho et al (2017) ELLs may have negative feelings about themselves in response to many situations that they experience at school. ELLs often perceive that their classmates are prejudice against them. Therefore, this may keep ELLs from bonding with their classmates and becoming an integral part of the school community. ELLs may also have low self-esteem because they have not made friends or are unable to participate in the academic learning of their class.

SEL promotes social skill development which consequently improves academic performance (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Thus, social-emotional issues are recognized as problems by school districts. Therefore, SEL is being implemented across U.S. schools in order to increase academic growth. All students can benefit from explicit instruction on SEL within and beyond the classroom. There is a need for educators and policymakers to understand the need for, and the effects of, organized efforts to promote SEL for ELLs.

Purpose

An important part of elementary school experience is socialization as well as teaching and practicing social skills. However, ELLs need more. They benefit from learning social skills but also due to lived trauma schools/classroom teachers must meet specific social-emotional needs that ELLs require (Cho et. al., 2019). The question then is how to meet social emotional needs of ELLs. It is an integral part of ELLs success that all teachers understand how to support the social-emotional needs of their students. The overarching question of this capstone is, how can elementary teachers support the social-emotional needs of ELLs? In order to help general education teachers, know and understand how to best support their ELLs, I am creating a professional development (PD) that will help elementary teachers explicitly teach, model and practice social skills within the classroom specifically for their ELLs. It is necessary for the success of ELLs academically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. This PD will be given to general education teachers and it will include various teaching methods including explicit teaching, individualizing, creating a positive climate, collaboration and support. All general education teachers will participate in a full day end of summer PD. Participants will listen and share ideas on how to support ELLs social-emotional learning. By the end of the PD, participants will have

created a lesson that supports their ELLs social-emotional learning within the classroom.

Summary /conclusion

ELLs face social-emotional needs not being met within the classroom. We can agree that social-emotional skills are an integral part to being successful within the elementary classroom and beyond. Without a doubt, ELLs are an important piece to the classroom and school community. Therefore, ELLs need to feel comfortable and safe in their new school. To mediate the problem, all general education teachers will participate in a PD aiming to help teachers understand the importance of SEL and how to support the social-emotional needs of their ELLs. All general education teachers will leave the PD with material and ideas on how to support their ELL students social-emotional skills. These ideas, instructional materials and lessons will then be implemented within their classrooms and school to support social-emotional learning that will lead to an increase of academic success. Supporting ELLs skills and needs will help create a safe and familiar learning environment for all students.

In chapter 2, I will present academic literature that addresses the issue of social emotional skills in the classroom for ELLs. Afterwards, in chapter 3, I will present the PD tools designed to support the social emotional needs of ELLs. In chapter 4, I will present my conclusion and needs for future research. In addition, in Appendix A, I will include handouts and guidelines for the entire PD.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is "the process for integrating thinking, feeling, and behavior to achieve important social tasks; meet personal and social needs; and develop the skills necessary to become a productive, contributing member of society" (Dresser, 2012, p.27). Effective SEL begins in preschool and continues through high school. There are five main competencies of social-emotional learning: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Cho et. al., 2019). A definition of each SEL competency will be defined below:

(1) self-awareness: ability to understand one's emotions, personal goals, and values (e.g., accurately assessing one's strengths and weaknesses, having positive mind-sets and a well-grounded self efficacy; (2) self-management: ability to regulate emotions and behaviors (e.g., delaying gratification, managing stress, controlling impulses, persevering challenges to achieve personal goals); (3) social awareness: ability to take the perspective of those with different backgrounds (e.g., feeling compassion, understanding social norms for behavior, and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports); (4) relationship skills: ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships (e.g., communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, seeking help when it is needed); and (5) responsible decision making: ability to make constructive and ethical choices (e.g., considering ethical standards, safety concerns, and behavioral norms, making realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, taking the health and well-being of self and others into consideration (Cho et al., 2019, p.41).

The goals of SEL are to promote students' self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship, and responsible decision-making skills. These lay the foundation for improved academic performance that is reflected in more positive social behaviors and peer relationships, few conduct problems, less emotional distress, and improved grades and test scores (Durlak et al., 2011).

SEL is promoted across multiple contexts every day. SEL is more than just a program or lesson. It is about how teaching and learning happens, as well as what you teach and where you learn. These five core competencies all play a key role in SEL within the classrooms, schools, homes, and communities. There is a need for SEL curriculum and instruction, schoolwide practices and policies, and family and community partnerships. SEL creates equitable, supportive, and welcoming learning environments and more than two decades of research has shown the positive long-lasting benefits that go beyond the classroom.

U.S. schools are lagging in the instruction that fosters social-emotional development, as well as academic (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014). Too often schools merely focus on academics and cognitive development within the classroom. But only focusing on cognitive development, is not enough. Research has shown that social-emotional skills play an important role in cognitive development. "We know emotion is important to the educative process because it drives attention, which drives learning and memory. It's been proven that emotions impact perception, motivation, critical thinking and behavior," (Hudson 2015, Introduction).

There is now a growing awareness in the U.S. among educations and policymakers about the importance of SEL development for student success. Social-emotional skills play a critical role in determining if students are prepared to meet the demands of the classroom as well as if they are able to fully engage in learning and benefit from instruction (Denham et al., 2010).

Academic learning and SEL

Educators know that the core SEL competencies are necessary to promote academic learning, According to Fisher and Frey (2020), social and emotional conditions influence academic learning. Brain research has shown that emotional and content learning cannot be obtained separately or independently (Dresser, 2012). SEL should not be neglected because emotions can either enhance or interfere with the brain's ability to learn. Learning social-emotional skills at a young age can lead to future academic success and positive relationships (Malloy, 2019). Social-emotional learning is an integral part of the learning climate.

ELLs may face many environmental stressors that can negatively impact ELLs success within and beyond the classroom. For example, "many students with refugee backgrounds who experienced war and persecution or had limited or interrupted schooling face new challenges post settlement, including acquisition of a new language, culture, and system while still dealing with post-traumatic stress" (Cho, et.al., 2019). ELLs deal with a vast amount of academic and social-emotional difficulties. Currently, more than 10% of all students in the U.S. public schools are ELLs and they are the fastest growing student population of the PK-12 schooling (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014).

Cho et al. (2019) conducted an interview to ask teachers to identify what SEL competencies they felt ELLs lacked most. Teachers identified two of the five SEL competencies. The two competencies were social-awareness and relationship skills. According to the teachers, lacking these two competencies often lead to the disruption of class and thus interrupted learning for all students. Teachers often observed ELLs interacting, communicating, and/or cooperating ineffectively with others as well. The authors report that many ELLs lack the relationship skills

needed to interact with their peers, like speaking, listening, behaving, and playing which consequently may negatively impacted their academic development.

According to Dresser (2012), low self-esteem and fear can negatively impact a student's ability to learn. Data has revealed that English language learners lag behind their English-speaking peers in academic achievement (Uribe-Florez et. al., 2014). U.S. Department of Education (2011) state:

> According to the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress only 12% of students identified as ELs scored "at or above proficient" in mathematics in the fourth grade and only 5% were proficient in the eighth grade as compared with 42% and 35% of non-EL students in fourth and eighth grade, respectively (pg. 235).

Social-emotional and academic difficulties that ELLs frequently face, may negatively impact ELLs. For instance, young children who are more socially competent and emotionally perceptive may be more successful in school and their relationships. Niehaus and Adelson (2013) found that Asian language speaking ELLs rated themselves significantly lower on peer relationships compared to their English-speaking peers. Unlike their English-speaking peers, many ELLs lack confidence and do not feel appreciated or respected and tend to become disengaged from school. Thus, students who have greater peer acceptance, are more likely to attend school and excel academically (Dresser, 2012).

The focus of schools has been mainly academic and cognitive development however current findings suggest that social-emotional learning is equally important for ELLs (Niehaus & Adelson, 2013). Dresser (2012) states that "students with strong social-emotional skills learn to recognize and manage their emotions, develop empathy for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and learn to deal with challenging situations

constructively and ethically" (pg. 47). SEL has been shown to help students become successful academically, cognitively, and emotionally within the classroom and beyond.

Teacher Perspectives

Teachers do not always recognize the social-skills that their ELLs might bring to the classroom. Practitioners should understand that students already bring to school linguistic, academic, and social skills that they learned from their pervious experiences. For instance, Cho et al. (2019) states that, ELLs may have strong survival, resilience, and problem-solving skills. The authors indicate that many teachers evaluated their ELLs and concluded that they were "lacking social-emotional competence" (p.44) and unfortunately this led to their evaluation of low academic performance. Teachers need to have an open mind about their ELL students because looking past ELLs social-emotional strengths, can have a long-term negative consequence. When students do not have the support and confidence from their teachers, their academic performance can be negatively impacted (Dresser, 2012). It is important that teachers continue developing students SEL so they can become academically and emotionally successful. Teachers can do so by infusing SEL along with their academic curriculum.

How Teachers can Support SEL in the classroom

There are many teachers that believe in the importance of social-emotional skill development in order to reach academic achievement (Jacoby & Lesaux, 2019). In order to meet this goal, teachers must first establish a SEL environment within their classrooms. Teachers can do so by promoting equity and social justice within the classroom by recognizing and integrating their students' funds of knowledge; integrating student interest, background, strengths, and challenges, into instruction. Providing opportunity for students to share their experiences and stories comforts ELLs to understand themselves and each other, as well as build a strong classroom

community (Zehr, 2018). Once teachers do this, there is often a positive view of students' culture and cognitive resources within the classroom (Cho et al., 2019). The authors in Cho et al. (2019) identified multiple pedagogical methods used for SEL development that teachers have successfully used within the classroom. For instance, explicit teaching, individualizing, creating positive climate, and collaboration and support. Teachers in the Cho et al. (2019) study reported explicit teaching to address students social-emotional skills and needs. Teachers would use verbal instructions and modeling to appropriately teach social-emotional skills to students. Individualizing instruction was another way that teachers addressed social-emotional needs. For example, teachers in this study reported that they "spontaneously provided individualized instruction (e.g., offering a different task, working side by side, offering options, stepping in and assisting when necessary) and explicitly and immediately taught or modeled appropriate social-emotional behaviors or corrected inappropriate behaviors" (p.50) to teach and meet their students social- emotional needs. Another method used within the classroom is creating a positive climate and environment. Creating a safe and welcoming environment for ELLs was shown to help develop SEL (Cho et al., 2019). Many teachers stated that "celebrating successes, giving positive feedback and comments, and giving lots of encouragement and support" (p. 50) promoted SEL and academic success as well. Lastly collaboration and support were other methods used by teachers. Collaboration has been a successful tool to help with all student's success within and beyond the classroom. It is helpful to create a positive relationship with all students' parents, staff, and other teachers in order to be on the same page and promote positive changes in student's behaviors.

Programs/ Intervention Programs

In a world where emotional intelligence is critical for lifelong happiness, successful careers, and healthier relationships, SEL is a process to support students and adults to develop social-emotional skills. There are multiple different programs and interventions that have been implemented in school districts across the U.S, that have been researched and identified as effective SEL programs. Many of these programs have been studied and researched to find their effectiveness in student achievement and success.

CASEL

Districts across the U.S., specifically twenty, have adopted the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework, which is to develop assessments, instructions, and resources to promote students' social emotional, and academic learning (Cho et. al., 2019). CASEL supports educators and policy leaders in enhancing the experiences and outcomes for all PreK-12 students through developing high-quality resources for SEL development (CASEL, 2020a). Their website provides tools and resources to support high-quality SEL implementation for free. There has been much research suggesting the positive impact of SEL programs. The programs discussed below are all CASEL approved.

Positive Action

Some SEL programs teach social-emotional skills directly. For instance, Positive Action is an intervention program designed to promote a healthy self-concept and to establish positive actions for the body and mind that focuses on improving and developing individual social skills (CASEL, 2020b). This program explicitly teaches SEL skills, including the five competencies. The program is for prekindergarten through twelfth grade and consists of sequential lessons, including scripts organized around different themes and skills. Positive Action is a program used classroom, school, family, and community wide.

The effectiveness of Positive Action has been evaluated in multiple large trials, which evaluated students up to a three-year period. The trial outcomes indicated that there was improved academic performance, reduced conduct problems, improved academic behaviors, and substance abuse prevention (CASEL, 2020b). The results of research indicate 62% reduction in violence, 47% reduction in tobacco use, 51% reduction in bullying, 28% reduction in absenteeism, 51% improvement in math achievement, 20% improvement in reading achievement, 85% reduction is disciplinary referrals, and many more positive impacts (CASEL, 2020b).

Second Steps

Second step is another program rooted in SEL. Second Step is used by schools all around the world and reaches 15 million students annually (Secondstep, 2020). This program supports student safety, readiness to learn, school culture, and academic success. The engaging lessons, stories, activities, and books reach every learner in the classroom. Each lesson is organized around a single social-emotional skill each week.

Randomized control trials have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of Second Step at all grade levels. For the purpose of this capstone, we will discuss the findings of the trials based Second Step SEL for elementary school. Low et al. (2015) conducted a randomized controlled trial over a one-year period with 7300 students and 321 teachers in 61 schools across six school districts, from kindergarten to second grade. The authors found significant improvements in social-emotional competence and behavior in students. Additionally, there were improved students' outcomes.

Responsive Classroom

Other SEL approaches like Responsive Classroom (RC) is an intervention program used to create a caring and engaging classroom environment. RC integrates SEL with academics and classroom teaching practices. Through this intervention, students develop strong social and academic skills within and beyond the classroom.

Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based approach that has been independently researched. Implementing the Responsive Classroom approach has been found to higher academic achievement, improved teacher-student interaction, and higher quality instruction have been found (Responsive Classroom, 2020).

These programs and interventions were all found to promote SEL, according to Cho et. al. (2019), when students were given opportunities to practice and apply the skills in actual situations. However, Durlak et al. (2011) states that just by picking a strong program is not enough. Evidence-based SEL programs depend on high-quality implementation. Implementing and supporting the program selected is extremely important. Many of these SEL programs incorporated the school as a whole, in order to promote a more positive and supportive relationship among teachers, students, and families. These programs are designed to promote SEL beyond the classroom.

SEL Impact

There has been more than two decades of research of the SEL impact on students, teachers, and adults. For instance, science has linked SEL to student gains. With high-quality SEL, students have better social-emotional skills, improved attitudes about self, others, and school, positive classroom behavior, and 11 % gain on standardized achievement tests (Durlak et al.,

2011). The authors also found fewer conduct problems, less emotional stress and lower drug use. The research indicates that SEL programs have a positive impact on students and adults.

Jennings and Greenberg (2009), discuss that teachers who possess social and emotional competencies are more likely to stay in the classroom longer because they're able to work more effectively with challenging students. Working with challenging students is one of the main causes of teacher burnout. There have also been statistically significant associations between measured social-emotional skills in kindergarten and key young adult outcomes across multiple domains of education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health (Jones et al., 2015). This research links positive outcomes and SEL for students and adults.

Selecting SEL Strategies

The interventions and programs discussed above have been proven to be effective for elementary school children (Cho et. al., 2019). For instance, programs that weave in SEL, increase interest, foster a safe and positive environment, offer rich reading experience that increase students' social-emotional and academic skills, and promote reflection (Dresser, 2012). However, one important implication is these intervention programs were created and implemented to teach a broad range of students, not specifically for ELLs. Thus, there needs to be more interventions specifically created and proven to promote SEL for ELLs.

Since SEL is an essential part of early elementary grades, it is the responsibility of the teacher to promote and support their students social-emotional needs, as ELLs interact within the classroom and school setting (Cho et al., 2019). Creating a classroom and school where students feel welcomed, safe, and valued is the first step in creating a positive social-emotional environment for students.

Teachers should support and teach students to name their feelings and emotions. Hudson (2015), drawing on sociocultural theory, indicates that if students understand emotions and know how to deal with them, it will promote and develop our students learning within the classroom Teachers can expand on students SEL skills by using vocabulary schema for "emotion" words. Fisher and Frey (2020) recommend using students home language and visual representations. Another way to help emotional-regulation is to create a word wall of "emotion" words to help students identify their own feelings. Research has shown that if a child is able to understand, accept, and manage feelings and emotions, there will be an increase in academic achievement (Hudson, 2015). Hence, the importance for teachers to teach their students as a whole!

Conclusion

There is a growing number of English language learners entering the United States school systems. The need for additional research on implementing SEL into the mainstream classroom with ELLs is essential. Creating a safe learning environment for students and integrating SEL across the curriculum, will develop and improve social and emotional skills for all students, including ELLs. An implication to this research is that teachers need to be proactive with SEL and ELLs. If the overall desired goal is to improve ELLs academic and cognitive development, then investing time and resources in SEL in early elementary years, is likely to have a positive impact on ELLs success within and beyond the classroom.

It is our duty, as teachers, to foster a safe learning environment by providing our students with strategies to recognize and name their emotions. Teachers are the role models for their students and our behavior plays a role in our students lives. The teaching of social-emotional skills should be woven into all subjects, across all curriculum, and all grade levels. Implementing the effective programs and interventions discussed above can have a positive impact on all our

students', including ELLs academic, emotional, and cognitive success. In chapter 3, I will

present the PD tools designed to support the social emotional needs of ELLs within the

classroom.

Chapter 3: Professional Development

Opener

Put yourself in the shoes of an English language learner (ELL/ELLs). You are a 3rd grade

student that just moved to the United States, trying to fit into a new school, and you have to do

school work in a language you are just learning. Imagine having adult responsibilities in addition

to dealing with trauma experienced in your home country. Cho et. al. (2017), reported that in

addition to the challenges of learning new academic skills, ELL students also needed to acquire a

range of social-emotional skills in the classroom through social-emotional learning (SEL). What

is social-emotional learning?

Part 1 of the Professional Development: 1 hour

Agenda

Today's PD will be approximately four hours. Today will be discussing SEL. We will define

SEL, list and understand the five SEL competencies, learn about what SEL looks like in a

classroom, school, and community, learn how SEL works, and how as teachers can we support

SEL within the classroom for all students including ELLs. Teachers will receive a handout with

the goals of today's PD (see Appendix, Figure 1).

The first half of today's session will be open discussions and taking notes. The second half of

today's session will be collaborative work to create SEL activities that meet each SEL

competency.

Introduction (5 minutes):

Teachers will be sitting at tables of five. Teachers will be receiving name tags to wear on

their shirt. They will have five minutes to introduce themselves and get to know one another.

Research shows that creating a safe and welcoming learning environment may promote social-

emotional learning within the classroom (Cho et. al., 2019). Therefore, providing the

opportunity for teachers to get to know each other will help promote a safe and welcoming learning environment for the PD.

First half of today's session (1 hour):

Teachers will be asked "*What is social-emotional learning?"* Teachers will write down in their own words what SEL is on the handout in front of them (see Appendix, Figure 2). After, teachers will discuss amongst one another at their tables their definitions. Each table will write down one definition that they all agree upon on the handout passed out (see Appendix, Figure 3). Next, each group will share out their definition and as a whole PD we will discuss the definitions.

Collaboration is a tool used by many teachers in order to help with all student's success within and beyond the classroom. It is a tool to create positive relationships and promote learning (Cho et al., 2019). Thus, in this PD teachers will be collaborating with one another to learn knew knowledge.

Then teachers bring their attention to the PowerPoint where teachers will watch a video (1:59) titled "What is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?" (CASEL, 2020a). After the video has played, the next slide will define Social-emotional learning. Social-emotional learning is "the process for integrating thinking, feeling, and behavior to achieve important social tasks; meet personal and social needs; and develop the skills necessary to become a productive, contributing member of society" (Dresser, 2012, p.27). The short video and definition of SEL will lay the foundation to the PD. At this point teachers will have the opportunity to briefly make comments or ask a question.

Next, we will discuss the five competencies. The five competencies are self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship and responsible decision-making skills (Cho et al.,

2019). We will discuss each competency more in depth and teachers will be able to take notes on each competency (see appendix figure 4). SEL is about how we understand ourselves, how do we work well with others, and how do we make good decisions. So, everything from resilience, managing anger, how you deal with conflict, how you deal with others – is what underlies everything. And we know if you are intentional.

We will then discuss the goals of SEL. The goals of SEL are to promote self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making skills. The five competencies lay the foundation for academic performance. When students have social-emotional skills, they have more positive behaviors, relationships, few conduct problems, less emotions, and better grades and test scores (Durlak et al., 2011). These skills transfer outside of school as well. Thus, if students learn these social-emotional skills at a young age they will likely be a contributing member of society.

Following, we will talk about how SEL is not just in a classroom, SEL is across multiple contexts every day meaning, in the school, and the community. Once, we have discussed what SEL looks like, we will review the research of how SEL works.

Lastly, we will discuss effective programs and instruction that teachers have used in their classrooms and school to promote SEL. To briefly name a few programs, Positive Action, Second Steps, Responsive and Classroom (Cho et al., 2019). Lastly, teachers will watch a short video (2:20) to close out the first session of today before their break.

Break
Teachers will be given a 30-minute break.

Part 2 of the Professional Development: 2 hours

Second half of today's session (2 hours):

Once teachers get back from their break, they will be given the directions for the second half of today's PD (see Appendix, Figure 5). Tables will be assigned one of the five SEL competency. There are five tables of teacher so each competency will be used. Teachers will be working collaboratively with their groups to create activities that can be implemented in the classroom and/or school. Teachers will be given the rest of the PD to complete this task. Teachers will be given a graphic organizer and example if needed (see Appendix Figure 6).

Closing and Next Steps (40 minutes)

At the end of today's session, each group will share out the activities they created to the entire PD, approximately five minutes each table. Once everyone has shared their work, there will be some time for questions, concerns, and/or comments. Teachers will be given their homework for the next session (see Appendix, Figure 7). Teacher will be implementing their activities within their own classrooms. Teachers will reflect on the activities by asking questions like what do you think your students liked most about this activity and why, what do you think your students learned from this activity, what was the most challenging part of this activity, and was this activity successful? After reflecting on these questions and writing them down, participants will come to the next meeting with implications, comments, and concerns. The next meetings goals are too reflect. Reflection is an important process for teachers because they are able to grow and improve their teaching.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Introduction

 This capstone project focused on addressing the question, how can elementary teachers support the social-emotional needs of ELLs? Often younger ELLs are placed in mainstream classrooms with pull out services. Placing much of the responsibility on mainstream teachers to integrate and welcome ELLs into an English monolingual environment. The studies conducted by Niehau & Adelson (2013; 2014) show great potential when SEL is implemented into the classroom. Implementing SEL throughout the curriculum and as a foundation of the classroom to create a safe and supportive environment, will likely improve students social and emotional skills. When SEL is correctly integrated into curriculum, over time ELLs are likely to show meaningful improvements in classroom behavior, attendance, and overall achievement.

Implications for Students

 The concepts and ideas presented in this capstone project, reflect the importance of incorporating SEL in the classroom for students. Research has shown student gains from SEL integrated in the classroom. For instance, students have better social-emotional skills, improved attitudes about self, others, and school, positive classroom behavior, and 11 percentile-point gain on standardized achievement tests (Durlak et al., 2011).

Implications for Teaching

 All teachers are teachers of ELLs and it is important that teachers keep an open perspective. Teachers can benefit from the concepts and ideas of my research by implementing SEL into their classrooms to improve ELL and non-ELL students social and emotional learning. Implementation of SEL throughout the curriculum and as a foundation of the classroom and school, can not only improve students social-emotional skills, as well as academic development. Teachers also benefit from SEL personally because they will possess social and emotional skills

that will give them the ability to work effectively through the challenges that accompany

students into our schools.

Recommendations

There is still a great need for additional research on implementing SEL into the classroom

with ELLs. I recommend additional research on the effects and modifications of the programs

and models used for SEL across schools and their effect on the ELL population.

Final Thoughts

In conclusion, social emotional learning in the elementary classroom might be the missing

key for ELLs to achieve long-term success inside of and beyond the classroom. Therefore,

teachers must implement SEL with programs and models that are effective to improve ELL and

mainstream students achievement socially and academically.

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Appendix

Figure 1

Agenda and goals for Day 1

Today's Session Goals

Teachers will be able to…
- Define Social-emotional learning (SEL)
- Identify the five SEL competencies
- Discuss how to support SEL and ELLs
- Understand SEL and the common language
- Create SEL activities that can be implemented within K-6 classrooms

Notes:

Figure 2
Paper for participants to write their own definition of SEL

Social-emotional learning (SEL) in your own words

_____

_____

_____

_____

Social-emotional learning (SEL) in your own words

_____

_____

_____

_____

Social-emotional learning (SEL) in your own words

_____

_____

_____

_____

Figure 3
Paper for participants to write their group definition of SEL

Group definition of Social-emotional learning (SEL)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Group definition of Social-emotional learning (SEL)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Group definition of Social-emotional learning (SEL)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Figure 4
Note taking sheet for participants to take notes

Social-emotional competencies

Self- Awareness is the ability to understand one's emotions, personal goals, and values.

_____

_____

Self-management is the ability to regulate emotions and behaviors.

_____

_____

Social awareness is the ability to take the perspectives of those with different backgrounds.

_____

_____

Relationship skills is the ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships.

_____

_____

Responsible decision-making is the ability to make constructive and ethical evaluation of

consequences of various actions, taking the health and well-being of self and others into

consideration.

_____

Figure 5
Part 2 directions for the professional development

Directions

1. Each group will be given a SEL competency.
2. As a group work together to create targets for students in grades K-6
3. Brainstorm activities that can be implemented within the classroom.
- Use the graphic organizer to complete

Figure 6

Graphic organizer for participants to use for professional development activity

Competency: _____

Definition:_____

_____

Grade	Targets	Activities

Example:

Competency: Self-awareness

Definition: the ability to understand one's emotions, personal goals, and values.

Grade	Targets	Activities
K-2	1. Identify and describe basic emotions.	• Draw faces that describe how you feel after listening to/reading stories.

Figure 7
Participants homework for the next professional development session

What do I need to do between now and our next session?

1. Have one member at your table type in your activities from today's session into the

   Google Document for everyone in today's session to see.

2. Implement a couple of activities created in today's PD session.

3. Reflect on the activity. Ask yourself some of these questions:

   a. What do you think your students liked most about this activity and why?

   b. What do you think your students learned from this activity?

   c. What was the most challenging part of this activity?

   d. Was this activity successful? Yes or no? Why?

4. Come to the next sessions with your reflections to discuss.