

# Elementary School Teacher Perceptions on Social-Emotional Learning and Implications for Instruction

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**January 13, 2017**

**Nova Southeastern University**

**Total Qualitative Report Conference**

# Show What is not Known About Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom

Social and Emotional Learning



I am... knowledgeable	I care... caring
I can... capable	I will... responsible

# Problem Statement

- ▶ The recent release of the draft standards for preschool and kindergarten in Massachusetts noted the need for children to develop and extend their social and emotional skills through practice, focused instruction, and classroom opportunities to develop and expand relationships (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care [EEC], 2015).
- ▶ Assessment of student social and emotional competencies is essential for effective instruction and widespread use of this type of data in Massachusetts has not been achieved (Rennie Center, 2015).
- ▶ The problem is that within a New England school district, kindergarten through third grade teachers do not have a vertical articulation of social and emotional learning embedded in academic instruction.

# Social Emotional Learning in K-3 Classrooms

- ▶ Many students are lacking SEL skills for future success. This can lead to less connectedness at school, poor academic performance, and negative behavior and health (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).
- ▶ This is a serious concern for students struggling in this area because without an emphasis on the development of social competencies these students will not achieve academic success.

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# Chapter 2: Literature Review

- ▶ Overview
- ▶ Theoretical Framework
- ▶ Kindergarten through Third Grade Elementary Education
- ▶ Social Emotional Learning
- ▶ Early Childhood Social-Emotional Assessments
- ▶ Classroom Quality
- ▶ Classroom Discourse
- ▶ Research Questions

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# Theoretical Framework

Daniel Goleman (1995) suggested that emotional intelligence (EQ) includes self-control, zeal, persistence, and the ability to motivate others. EQ and successful behavior is not exclusively cognitive and these skills are teachable. This approach to social learning advocated the reciprocity between intelligence quotient (IQ) and EQ. A high EQ can drive IQ to higher potential and if IQ applies to EQ this will drive more prosocial behavior. Goleman noted that once children learn to master the elements that comprise emotional intelligence through teaching this could have a direct influence on their ability to perform cognitively.

Today's classrooms and educators serve socio-culturally diverse students with varied abilities and needs. Social-emotional learning (SEL) has been defined as the processes of developing social and emotional competencies in children and adults through instruction (CASEL, 2013). This type of learning is a vital part of all classroom instruction, together with the promotion of academic skills. The Center for the Study of Social Policy (2012) emphasized that positive social-emotional and mental health are key components of a child's healthy development.

# Social Competencies

Five social competencies defined by CASEL are highly recognized and cited in the literature in respect to SEL.



# Research Questions

**Central research question.** What are kindergarten through third grade teachers experiences while facilitating social-emotional learning?

The following sub questions will assist the researcher in gaining additional information in order to understand the teachers' experiences.

**Research Question 1.** What are the teacher's experiences with social and emotional learning?

**Research Question 2.** What are the complications and potential barriers for teachers to incorporate social and emotional instruction into curriculum?

**Research Question 3.** What are the successes of addressing student social-emotional needs?

**Research Question 4.** How and in what ways is social-emotional learning integrated into academic instruction in elementary classrooms?

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# Interview Protocol [Instrument]

The instrument used for the qualitative study was the interview protocol consisting of seven open-ended questions. The following questions were asked:

- ▶ Please take some time to share your personal thoughts on social and emotional learning.
- ▶ Can you talk about your experiences with the challenges you have encountered addressing the social and emotional needs of students?
- ▶ Can you talk about any benefits you have encountered addressing the social and emotional needs of students?
- ▶ What do you think about using observations to gather data on students' social and emotional needs?
- ▶ Based on your personal experiences, explain the impact of academic instruction on social and emotional learning.
- ▶ Based on personal experiences, if you were to give advice to another teacher who is going to work on social and emotional learning with their students, what would you say?
- ▶ Is there anything I did not ask you that you would like to share?

# Methodology in a Brief

As a phenomenological qualitative study, the participants in the study needed to have some experience with the subject of the study, namely social-emotional skill development.

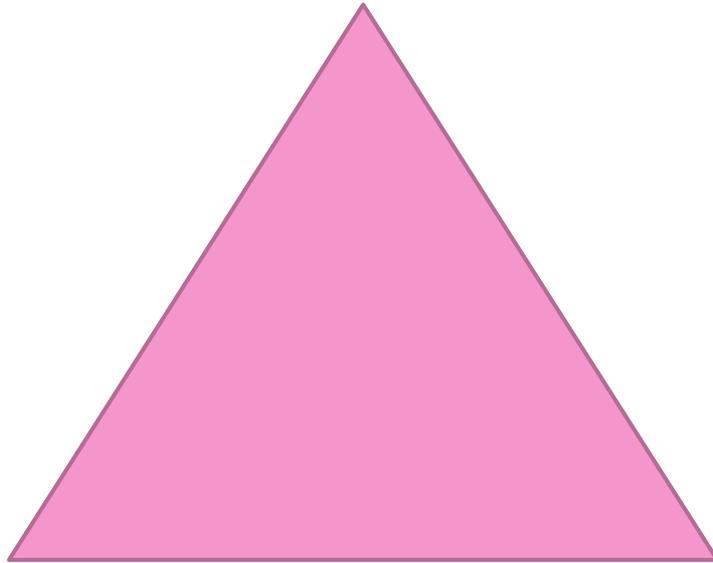
The researcher solicited volunteers to participate in the study from the three primary elementary schools in the **Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District in Massachusetts**.

The researcher used anecdotal information collected from interviews with teachers; included in the sample in combination with classroom observations focused on social-emotional instruction, sensitivity, and student behavior, and a review of behavior office referrals.

This triangulation of data helped the researcher to determine how teacher perceptions and experiences affected their instruction of and, ultimately, student behavior related to social-emotional skills.

# TRIANGULATION

**Interviews:**  
6 Teachers



**Observations:**  
Classroom Assessment Scoring  
System [CLASS]

**Documentation:**  
Referrals

# Observations

The second data point for this study was classroom observations. Observation data was collected using the Classroom Observation Assessment System (CLASS) developed by Robert Pianta, Karen La Paro, and Bridget Hamre (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). CLASS has a training and implementation structure that has been researched and The CLASS tool is used to conduct six 20-minute observation cycles in one session. In between each observation, the observer codes the observation data for about ten-minutes before beginning the next cycle. The CLASS tool measures interactions between students and adults across three domains with related dimensions. The domains are emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Emotional support is the domain most cogent to this study and was, therefore, the domain coded by the researcher. The emotional support domain includes the following dimensions: positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, and regard for student perspectives. Each participant's set of observations were digitally recorded using an iPad on a Swivl device. Swivl is a small robot that holds a tablet device and follows a subject, in this case the participant, wearing a marker (Swivl, 2014). While the Swivl follows the participant around the classroom, the iPad creates and stores a digital recording.

# Climate is a standardized tool with ratings from 1 to 7

- ▶ Positive Climate
- ▶ You want a high score
- ▶ 5 to 7
- ▶ Teacher Sensitivity and Perspective
- ▶ Looking for relationships and respect in the classroom
- ▶ You want above a 5
- ▶ Negative Climate
- ▶ You want a low score
- ▶ Never above 1
- ▶ Teacher Sensitivity and Perspective
- ▶ Looking for negative affect
- ▶ Teacher and student facial expressions and sarcasm

Table 1

*Interview Data of Six Teachers*

Subject	Site	Background	Interactions relationships	Trust safety	Differentiation	Classrooms	Total themes
EST1	3	10	11	5	4	4	34
EST2	3	4	4	4	3	0	15
EST3	2	12	3	4	5	15	39
EST4	1	7	0	1	0	8	16
EST5	2	2	0	0	2	1	5
EST6	1	10	5	1	2	5	23

Table 2

*CLASS Observation Data of Six Teachers*

Subject	Site	Area	Positive climate score	Negative climate score	Teacher sensitivity score	Regard for student perspective score
EST1	3	Math	7	1	7	6
EST2	3	LA	7	1	7	7
EST3	2	LA	6	2	6	5
EST4	1	LA/math	6	1	6	6
EST5	2	LA/math	4	3	4	5
EST6	1	LA	7	1	7	7

CLASS Scale	Interview Codes	Office Referrals
Low 1-2	Student Background	Major
Mid 3-5	Interactions/Relationships	Minor
High 6-7	Trust/Safety	
	Differentiation	
	Outside Classroom Resources	

Table 3

*Data Triangulation of Six Teachers*

Subject	Site	Grade level	Positive climate score	Negative climate score	Teacher sensitivity score	Regard for student perspective score	Interview code totals	Office referrals
EST1	3	Math	7	1	7	6	34	6
EST2	3	LA	7	1	7	7	15	5
EST3	2	LA	6	2	6	5	39	45
EST4	1	LA/math	6	1	6	6	16	0
EST5	2	LA/math	4	3	4	5	5	62
EST6	1	LA	7	1	7	7	23	12

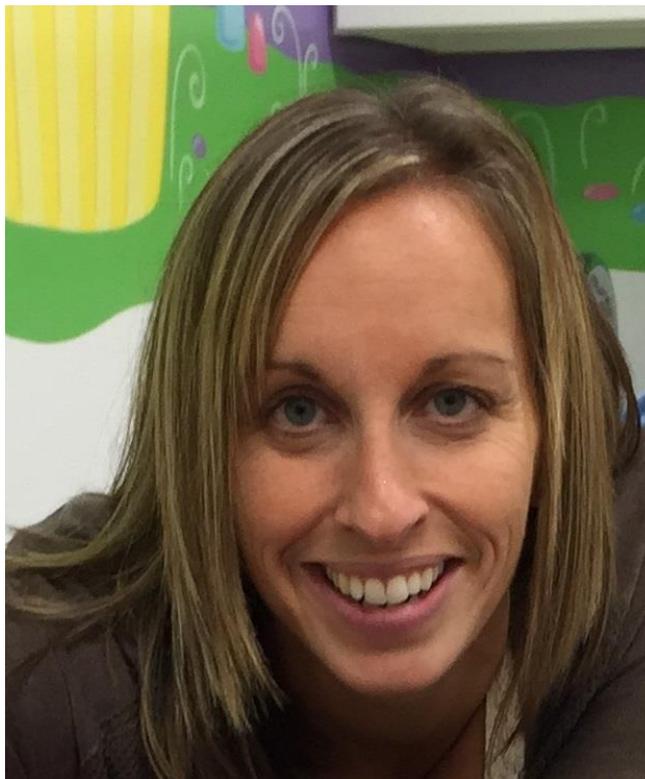
# Show What is not Known About Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom

ANYONE CAN OBSERVE A TEACHER  
GIVING LESSONS IN A DISCIPLINE, BUT  
NOT EVERYONE CAN OBSERVE THE  
CLIMATE, WHICH IS THE SOCIAL AND  
EMOTIONAL INTERACTIONS . . . IT IS  
ALL ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIPS BUILT  
WITHIN A CLASSROOM

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“I was at a meeting at the Department of Education for Massachusetts last week and spoke with the head of Social and Emotional Learning and he is very interested in this study. He would like to set up a meeting with me when the study is complete to discuss the findings and implications at the state level.”

“I am passionate about this research because social and emotional learning is a critical domain of development that leads to a student’s success not only in school but in all aspects of their lives.”



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Questions?

Dialogue?

