

COGNITIVE DISCOURSES

INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

ISSN 2321-1075 ISSN 2347-5692

VOLUME 11

ISSUE 1

JULY 2023

cdimj.naspublishers.com

Published Since 2013

Interpretation of the CASEL Framework and its Application to foster Socio-Emotional Learning in School Children from Kindergarten to Grade X

Dr. Vidhya Satish

Director

SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education, Sion and Nerul, India

Ms. Kalyani Arumugam

Headmistress

SIES High School, Matunga, Mumbai, India

Abstract

Education and human development both include social and emotional learning (SEL). In order to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, accomplish personal and group goals, feel and demonstrate empathy for others, build and maintain supportive relationships, and make caring decisions, all young people and adults must go through the SEL process. Research has shown that SEL-focused education has a positive impact and leads to a favourable effect on a variety of outcomes, including academic performance, good relationships, mental wellbeing, and more. The CASEL Framework is one of the commonly used SEL frameworks developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The five core SEL competencies of Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship skills and Responsible decision making are supported within varying contexts where SEL can occur which includes classrooms, schools, families and caregivers and communities. The present paper examines the role of a school from Kindergarten to Grade X with respect to interpreting the CASEL framework and applying its core competencies to facilitate holistic learning in children of a School affiliated to Maharashtra Board of Secondary Education – the SIES High School, Matunga, Mumbai, India. SEL is transformative in nature. Research suggests that that Social and Emotional skills are key to future success in an individual. The fact that they are malleable accentuates the need for understanding,

interpreting and applying these core SEL competencies by the school along with its other stakeholders.

Keywords: socio-emotional learning, CASEL framework, education

Introduction

Holistic Education is the need of the hour. This is also the main objective of Education. While there is a tremendous emphasis on development of cognitive and linguistic competencies in academic settings, socio-emotional development is often not given the due importance. Hence it becomes imperative that the curriculum followed at educational institutions ought to integrate socio emotional skills in the curriculum.

What is Socio-Emotional Learning?

Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process by which all children and adults gain and use the information, abilities, and attitudes necessary to:

- create wholesome identities
- controlling feelings
- realise individual and group objectives
- feel and demonstrate compassion and empathy for others
- create and uphold supportive connections
- make thoughtful, accountable judgements

Thus, SEL is the process through which all of us understand and manage our own emotions, maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. Social and emotional

competencies not only raise academic achievement and educational attainment but also display strong correlations with personal satisfaction and growth, citizenship and reduced risky behaviours like violence and drug use. In fact, the education of the whole child has been observed in cultures around the world for generations (First Nations Health Authority, 2012).

Need for Socio-Emotional Learning

Research reiterates the 3 important outcomes of SEL:

Future Success is Predicted by Socio Emotional Learning

According to Oberle et al. (2014), social and emotional intelligence is a predictor of superior academic accomplishment. Important adult outcomes, such as educational attainment, stable employment, and decreased crime rates, are predicted by a child's social and emotional development (Jones et al., 2015).

Socio-Emotional Learning is Malleable

Research in the field of developmental cognitive neuroscience has shown that social and emotional abilities can be developed at any age (Diamond, 2012). The brain develops throughout sensitive times in childhood and adolescence, which is a good time for social and emotional learning (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019). In comparison to children who did not participate in high quality SEL programming, findings from a major meta-analysis of 213 research involving more than 270,000 pupils revealed the following advantages for those who did:

Improvements in behaviour in the classroom and in students' attitudes towards themselves, others, and the school.

An improved capacity for controlling anxiety and despair.

A 11-percentile points improvement in academic performance.

Socio Emotional Learning is Sticky

In a comparison of four meta-analyses looking at the impacts of universal school-based SEL programmes, it was found that kids benefited on a variety of behavioural, attitudinal, emotional, and academic outcomes, and that these benefits maintained over numerous follow-up periods.

In addition to achieving higher levels of economic and educational success, those who received SEL intervention were significantly less likely to experience mental health disorders (such as anxiety and depression) 12 and 15 years after the SEL intervention, according to research on the long-term effects of multi-year SEL programming (Hawkins et al., 2008).

There is a significant association between social and emotional skills measured after an intervention and higher levels of wellbeing up to 18 years later, according to the findings of a recent analysis investigating the long-term effectiveness of SEL treatments (Taylor, et., al 2017).

The CASEL Framework

The CASEL Framework is one of the commonly used SEL frameworks developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) a Chicago-based Non-Profit Organization. CASEL Framework recommends that SEL programmes should have key competencies as direct targets.

Competence in Self Awareness – Understand one’s own emotions, personal goals and values.

Competencies in self-management- Ability to regulate emotions and behaviours.

Competence in social awareness - Ability to take perspective of those from different cultures and backgrounds.

Competence in relationship skills - Providing students with tools they require to establish and maintain a healthy and rewarding relationships.

Competencies in responsible decision making- Ability to consider ethical standards, safety concerns and accurate behaviours.

The five core SEL competencies of Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship skills and Responsible decision making are supported within varying contexts where SEL can occur which includes classrooms, schools, families and caregivers and communities.

In the recent years, the world has been facing the rise of intolerance, hate and extremism. The youth need critical solutions and coping mechanisms to address such grave issues. The present paper examines the role of a school from Kindergarten to Grade X with respect to interpreting the CASEL framework and applying its core competencies to facilitate holistic learning in children of a School affiliated to Maharashtra Board of Secondary Education – the SIES High School, Matunga, Mumbai, India. For this paper, we are presenting the Love- kindness Model adopted by our school. This model can be adopted by schools to sensitise the school students and build their socio emotional quotient.

We have hereby mapped excerpts of the activities carried out by our school with the five core CASEL Competencies:

1. Competency in Self Awareness: In order to build this competency in school students, we at SIES High School organized the following programmes:

a) Life skill sessions that help students to look inward and value themselves, reflect on their actions and accordingly manage emotions that will result in their holistic well-being.

b) Breathing exercises and prayers are regularly carried out during the morning assemblies which has helped students to think calmly and plan their day ahead in a better manner.

c) Weekly yoga sessions are carried out under expert guidance. These sessions reiterate the importance of being physically and mentally fit.

d) Students are encouraged to eat healthy and be kind to themselves through the organization of special fests such as the Millet festival, wild vegetable fest, to name a few.

e) Preschool children have activities that focus on self-awareness as circle time activities. Activities such as I am.... Or I like.... Or what makes me happy helps them to look inwards and focusses on enhancement of self-esteem.

e) Since physical fitness and health is a precursor to good mental health, our students are encouraged to focus on physical fitness through participation in various tournaments like Kabaddi, shot put, Football, cricket, chess etc.

2. Competency in self-management: In order to build this competency in school students, SIES High School organized the following programmes:

The alpha generation of today are exposed to social and digital media and consume a lot of inappropriate content. This could possibly make them vulnerable to evils like drug addiction. To combat this peril a session is organized for all students enlightening them about the consequences of drug abuse and addiction. Reflective exercises and activities are conducted following which students are asked to think and take a decision that is good for themselves. These exercises remind the students that they need to be kind to their body.

Case studies are given to students, and they are asked to discuss and deliberate. In this manner students attempt to solve their stress, anger and learn to manage their time effectively. Vignettes of cases for example, anecdotes of bullying episodes are given and children discuss, deliberate on feelings experienced by the one bullied and the bully. Such discussions help children to internalise feelings thereby leading to a change in behaviour. The session is facilitated by an educator.

3. Competence in social awareness: In order to build this competency in school students the following programmes were organized:

a) Deputing Climate ambassadors – This activity was carried out under the aegis of our sister institution that works for environment management. Select children from our school were deputed as climate ambassadors. These children work towards understanding the challenges faced by our planet Earth, think and reflect on the problems and take informed decisions. For example, the climate ambassadors chose topics such as ‘Say no to Plastic’ or ‘segregate dry and wet waste’ or ‘Be kind to our planet’ and work on sustainable solutions. For example, when discussions took place about how they can show their kindness to our planet, they came up with ideas like ‘Making eco-friendly bags and eco-friendly ganpatis’.

c) Elocution competitions were carried out on 'Say No To Corruption'. This helped students to research and develop awareness, thereby encouraging them to be ethical citizens.

d) Preschool children carried out simple cleanliness drives in their section of the school. From rhymes and songs to stories to lessons on social responsibility the school aims to bring in an attitudinal change from the foundational years.

Competence in relationship skills: The following activities were organized to foster competence in relationship skills:

a) Activities like Talentia are organized wherein students are given an opportunity to nurture their talents. Through this they learn to work as a team and be kind and considerate to one another.

b) Through the celebration of festivals like Onam, Pongal, Raksha Bandhan, children are taught to experience social diversity which is a key aspect.

c) An event titled 'Confluence of languages' was organised to not only recognise the diversity of languages that exist in our country but also to learn to respect all cultures and languages.

c) Grand Parents' Day celebration teaches the students the importance of having elders at home and being kind towards senior citizens. This is actually the need of the hour. This celebration fosters a bond between the grand child and the grand parent. It is an annual activity for preschool section.

5. Competency in responsible decision making: In order to build this competency in school students, SIES High School organized the following programmes:

a) The establishment of the student council, prefects, and discipline committee enables students to gather information, consider it, and then decide how an activity should be carried out or how a specific issue can be resolved without hurting feelings. The school should work to produce a leader who is emotionally stable and composed.

b) A career advisory programme is set up to assist students in making an educated choice regarding their career. Sister institutions conduct a program titled Career Panorama that showcases traditional as well as contemporary careers.

c) Circle time with HM – The prefects and the student council have a meeting with the principal on a regular basis. The free conversation with the principal has helped the council take right decisions with confidence as well as with conviction.

Conclusion

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a component of both education and human development. All children and adults must go through the SEL process in order to form healthy identities, regulate emotions, achieve individual and group objectives, feel and show empathy for others, create and sustain supportive relationships, and make considerate decisions. The school plays a pivotal role in helping children achieve optimal Socio-emotional competencies. To develop a well-rounded student, it is imperative that all stakeholders – teachers, support staff, parents, school management and the community work hand-in-hand to achieve the same. Such activities need to be commenced from the PreK level and progressively planned at all stages. Adopting the CASEL framework and mapping relevant activities would be an easy start to develop SEL competencies in any educational setting. As the Dalai Lama states “Happiness is not something ready-made. It come from your own actions”.

References

- Diamond, A. (2012). Activities and programs that improve children's executive functions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 21(5), 335–341.
- First Nations Health Authority (2012). *The First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness*
- Hawkins, J. D., Kosterman, R., Catalano, R. F., Hill, K. G., & Abbott, R. D. (2008). Effects of social development intervention in childhood 15 years later. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 162(12), 1133–1141. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpedi.162.12.1133>
- Immordino-Yang, M. H., Darling-Hammond, L., & Krone, C. R. (2019). Nurturing nature: How brain development is inherently social and emotional, and what this means for education. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 185–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1633924>
- Jones, D. E., Greenberg, M., & Crowley, M. (2015). Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(11), 2283–2290. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630>
- Lawlor, M. S., Baelen, R. N., & Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2023). *Social and emotional learning: Strengthening students' and educators' resilience and well-being*, University of British Columbia, Vancouver
- Oberle, E., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., Hertzman, C., & Zumbo, B. (2014). Social-emotional competencies make the grade: Predicting academic success in early adolescence. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 35, 138-147

Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development*, 88(4), 1156–1171.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12864>