TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING
AND THE IMPACT IT HAS ON STUDENTS

by

Shaniqua M. Person

Department of Community Care and Counseling, Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to discover teachers' lived experiences implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom setting. Social and emotional learning is the skill of an individual that learns the proper social skills required to control emotions while keeping healthy relationships as they make sound judgments. In social and emotional learning studies, teachers' perceptions have not been well represented. This study seeks to investigate teachers' experiences implementing social and emotional learning and the impact it has on students. The theory guiding this study is The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Framework. The Framework focuses on five core competencies that includes self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness. Utilizing this framework has become a leading support for social and emotional learning in the education setting. Data will be collected using written interview questionnaires online from teachers that have implemented social and emotional learning in the classroom setting. Thematic analysis comprises the qualitative data approach that will manage all gathered information from the participants by highlighting and recognizing patterns to examine and report themes with the data.

Keywords: social and emotional learning, experiences, teachers, students, education, collaborative for academic, social, and emotional learning

Dedication

I would first like to dedicate this manuscript to my family. To my parents, thank you so much for all that you have instilled in me. Thank you for always believing in me and being my biggest supporters. Your parenting and guidance have made me the woman I am today, and I hope that I have made you proud. All that you have done will never go unnoticed. I am thankful that God chose you to be my parents and that he chose this path just for me! Sheena and Mike Jr., this is for us. Anything I do in life will always be for y'all too. I appreciate you both for always being here for me, and believing in me, I couldn't imagine life without you. I challenge you both to always be ambitious and never give up on your goals in life. To my beloved family and friends, thank you for your prayers and support during this process. I appreciate you much for just simply being there when I needed you. Levi, I'm not sure you understand how much you mean to me. During this process you have literally been right there with me through every step. I didn't know how much I needed you, but I am thankful that I have you. I love you all so much!

Acknowledgments

I would love to express my gratitude and appreciation to my grade-school teachers and college professors that has helped with all the teaching and learning. I am a believer that it takes a village and you have been part of that village that has guided me where I am today. To many other individuals who have influenced me during this process, thank you.

To my dissertation committee, thank you so much. I appreciate you for helping me and directing me during this process. Thank you for believing in me and improving my confidence that I can do this. It has led me to the completion of my dissertation, and I will never forget this journey.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Mental Health Literacy (MHL)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Theory of Change (TOC)

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (YCEI)

Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

Historically, a child's schooling has focused on the students' academics, including math, reading, science, and social studies. However, in the past half century, schooling has shifted as it now also tries to focus more on the whole child. Focusing on the entire child involves concentrating on the student's overall well-being. One way to address the whole child and educate children on their well-being is through social and emotional learning. Social and emotional learning (SEL) has gained much attention globally for its use and effectiveness in the education curriculum. SEL is a method for students to develop skills and abilities to manage emotions, thoughts, and feelings for human development. Though social and emotional learning can be defined in numerous ways, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines it as an essential factor for education and human growth for young and older individuals to apply skills for self-esteem, emotion regulation, goal setting, empathy, relationship building, and responsibility (CASEL, 2023). CASEL uses a framework focusing on five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2023).

Many countries, states, and school districts have integrated the CASEL framework to aid students with their emotions, strengths and weaknesses, academic achievement, and engagement with others (Schwartz et al., 2022). Implementing SEL standards and guidelines has also provided a better foundation for teachers in the classroom setting. The SEL abilities have a more positive impact on social behaviors, behavioral problems, stress, anxiety, and academic success (Mahoney et al., 2018). This has motivated educators to apply SEL practices to their daily work to seek the impact on students. As SEL grows and receives much attention, it is imperative to

recognize the factors that may have the most significant impact. Although there are many factors that can affect SEL outcomes, teachers are one of the most important.

Background

In recent epochs, there has been escalating recognition of the significance of SEL in academies and how it can help scholars develop the expertise required for academic and individual success. This study investigates pedagogues' perceptions of SEL and how it is used in their classrooms. By building on former research regarding school SEL initiatives, this study provided further insight into this growing study area. History has shown that SEL programs have the prospect of enhancing students' academic performance, social connections, and emotional health (Cristóvão et al., 2017; McCormick et al., 2015; Panayiotou et al., 2019).

According to a study on SEL programs, students showed improvements in many areas including positive attitudes, academic achievement, and advanced social skills (Ahmade et al., 2020). Also, after investigation Ahmad et al., (2020) found that students in a universal SEL program showed lower rates of behavioral problems and advanced ranks of social competency versus students in a control group. A subsequent study on behavior provided similar results (Anderson et al., 2020). Anderson et al. (2020), conducted a study that examined the effects of SEL on students and found engagement led to improved decision-making, culminating in more appropriate behavior inside and outside the school setting. Additionally, SEL appeared to sharpen students' functional skills, which aids in developing their overall social and emotional intelligence.

However, despite the positive outcomes associated with SEL programs, there have been challenges in implementing them effectively in schools. One study found teachers' lack of understanding and buy-in for SEL programs was a significant barrier to implementation

(Brackett et al., 2012). Another study found instructors who perceived the relevance and significance of SEL were more likely to implement it effectively (Kautz et al., 2019)/ The current research expands on prior studies by examining the results of studies done to develop a rationale on students' social-emotional competencies and how they are contingent upon the teacher's part in SEL. Mainly, this study investigates how teachers rate the significance of SEL, their assurance in teaching it, and the barriers they confront in executing it efficiently. It also investigates the correlation between teachers' perceptions of SEL and students' social-emotional competence.

Instead of measuring the efficacy of SEL programs this study is distinct from previous works looking at teachers' views on SEL. Previous studies have pointed out the effectiveness of SEL programs. This study, however, examined how teachers perceive SEL and how their outlook affects their proficiency in implementing it correctly to improve students' outcomes. This research sought to investigate further the connection between teachers' opinions of SEL and students' social-emotional competency. This relationship showed how strongly teachers' beliefs regarding SEL could influence their students' social-emotional capacities (Domitrovich et al., 2016). Educators must utilize this information to create better techniques for fostering SEL in schools.

Situation to Self

The researcher, who is currently a professional school counselor, acknowledges the potential influences of her own experiences, presumptions, and preferences on this research. The role of a professional school counselor is to support all students in academics, career, and social/emotional development. Having previous experience with SEL, the researcher believes that SEL is important and that it can help the whole child as they continue their development.

However, the researcher also believes it is imperative to understand how the teachers feel about SEL as they are the professionals implementing the program in their daily lessons. Though the researcher shares some experience with SEL, her presumptions will not shape the approach to data collection and analysis.

Problem Statement

At the elementary level, students display the need for SEL. When students cannot or do not know how to manage their emotions, it leads to other challenges, such as behavior and academic problems. Teachers have been complaining much about the behavior issues that increase yearly. However, it has been challenging to implement SEL because the teachers are mainly responsible for the outcome of students' academics and preparing them for the next grade level. Teachers are struggling to find the time to meet their students' emotional needs while ensuring they are not missing any expectations for their academic success.

For many years, school districts have pressured teachers to instruct strictly from the academic curriculum, which makes them adhere to specific policies and procedures (Keiler, 2018). Teaching strictly from the academic curriculum that includes the essential subjects and not going beyond it can lead to behavioral problems, poor social skills, no cooperative learning, and inadequate relationship building (Alsubaie, 2015). With this issue being noticed by leaders and high stakeholders in education, social and emotional learning has been a topic of interest to help students in the classroom setting. SEL plays an essential role in education and the promotion of human development (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2022). Through the lens of many school districts, it is now recognized that students' s learning should be more than math, reading, social studies, and science (Shirley, 2020).

Therefore, an emphasis has been placed on teaching beyond core subjects to improve students' overall well-being.

Many studies find that SEL programs and frameworks used in the school setting have been valuable, increasing students' social-emotional competence. This approach has helped students improve self-regulation and relationship management. While the students are becoming more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and how to manage their emotions, the teachers are expected to be the experts in driving this approach in the classroom. Though research shows that SEL is effective (Corcoran et al., 2018; Sandilos et al., 2022; Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021) there needs to be more research on teachers' perceptions of the approach implemented in the curriculum and its impact on their students' social-emotional outcomes (Schonert-Reichl, 2016; Soutter, 2023). Ee and Cheng (2013) discuss that teachers' perceptions of embedding SEL in the curriculum are vital because they must find that it influences the student's learning to impact their overall social-emotional competence. Teachers must also have the knowledge and training to effectively implement SEL and be aware of their social-emotional competence (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

To promote SEL, there needs to be a strong foundation of knowledge and training for the teachers to implement a high-quality program effectively (Allbright et al., 2019). Teachers report that SEL implementation can be taught effectively if there is training to boost their confidence and abilities to support SEL in the students (Murano et al., 2019). Given that teachers trainings are mostly in the academic field, they may lack knowledge on SEL for their students (Oliveira et al., 2021). There is a lack of resources, training, and support at many schools to promote and enhance teachers' knowledge and implementation of SEL (Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to discover teachers' lived experiences implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom setting and its impact on students. This qualitative, phenomenological study explored teachers' beliefs and attitudes about SEL as they are professionals trying to apply these skills to their daily work. The theory that guided this study is The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Framework. The Framework focuses on five core competencies that include self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness. Utilizing this framework has become a leading support for social and emotional learning in the education setting. Interview questions are used to investigate teachers' experiences implementing social and emotional learning standards. The participants in the study are teachers of different races, gender, age, and years of experience with SEL.

Significance of the Study

The topic under review involving SEL based on teachers' perceptions is a crucial area in education. In recent years, social and emotional learning skills and abilities have been recognized along with the learning programs in students' academic and personal success (Durlak, 2016). Research has shown that students with social and emotional skills perform better academically, have better mental health outcomes, and are more likely to engage more positively with others (Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017). Although SEL is gaining much attention and interest, there are still significant gaps in how it is implemented in schools and how teachers perceive its impact on their students.

This problem is crucial because it significantly impacts students' academic and personal success. Research reveals students require specific skills, those that align with SEL, for

navigating the complex social world of schools, developing significant and confident relationships with peers and teachers, and making decisions that will lead to a better outcome. Students who lack these skills may struggle to succeed academically, experience mental health issues, and engage in negative behaviors such as bullying or substance abuse (Duncan et al., 2016; Kilgus et al., 2017). Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions of SEL and its impact on their students is critical for advocating for the implementation of teaching strategies which will promote positive student outcomes.

This study is also imperative because teachers are essential for advocating, promoting, and implementing SEL in the school setting. Teachers are the sole protagonists in education, working closely with students to provide instruction, support, and guidance. Therefore, teachers' beliefs and acceptance of SEL and their ability to effectively apply it is essential for promoting positive student outcomes (McComirk et al., 2015). Teachers who understand the importance of SEL and implement it effectively can positively impact students' social-emotional competence, leading to better academic performance, positive behavior, and improved mental health outcomes.

Furthermore, teachers' attitudes and points of view on SEL are necessary for informing policymakers and school officials on how best to promote SEL in schools (Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021). Policymakers and school officials are crucial in creating policies and programs that promote SEL in schools. However, they often rely on teachers' feedback and input to make decisions. Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions of implementing SEL and its impact on their students is essential for creating effective policies and programs that promote SEL in schools (Humphries et al., 2018).

This topic highlights the need for ongoing research and evaluation of SEL programs and interventions. Despite the growing interest in SEL, there are still significant gaps in our understanding of how to implement the best SEL in schools and what factors contribute to its effectiveness. Therefore, ongoing research and evaluation of SEL programs and interventions is critical for identifying effective practices and improving student outcomes (Lawson et al., 2018). Teachers' perceptions of SEL and its influences on students' emotional intelligence represent a critical issue in education. Understanding teachers' perceptions is essential for promoting positive student outcomes, informing policymakers and school administrators, and identifying effective practices for promoting SEL in schools (Jomaa et al., 2023).

Research Questions

This research mainly analyzed the connection between teachers' views on social-emotional learning (SEL) and students' social-emotional skills. Furthermore, it aimed to pinpoint any elements that could impact teachers' perspectives of SEL. There are specific questions to explore to understand the research's objectives. Some of the questions include:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the implementation and value of social and emotional learning?

2. What are teachers experiences with implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom?

3. In what ways do teachers believe, through their experience, social and emotional learning implementation improves students' SEL skills and academics?

This study investigated how social-emotional learning (SEL) is implemented in schools and how educators view it. Understanding teachers' views is crucial for effective SEL programs because prior research has shown that teachers can significantly impact fostering students' social-

emotional skills. The study attempts to determine the most useful approaches for SEL implementation in school contexts by studying these perceptions.

Definitions

1. *Social-emotional learning.* An essential factor for education and human growth for young and older individuals is to apply skills for self-esteem, emotion regulation, goal setting, empathy, relationship building, and responsibility (CASEL, 2023).

2. *Perception.* The action of belief, taking note, recognizing, identifying, and being sensitive and alert (Albright, 2015).

3. *Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).* A platform used for social and emotional learning is an essential factor for all students from preschool to high school (CASEL, 2023).

4. *Implementation.* Putting an action plan in place to improve a desired task through strategies and interventions (Krainer, 2021).

5. *Curriculum.* A program used in education that includes different content, instructions, and resources with the intent to apply knowledge and skills (Nollmeyer & Wig, 2022).

6. *Whole-Child.* The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) defines the whole child as focusing on long-term human development for all students, not just academic achievement (ASCD, 2023).

7. *Well-being.* Having positive feelings of happiness and satisfaction and performing well while showing growth in self-control, relationships, abilities, and purpose, being able to continuously change and succeed (Ruggeri et al., 2020).

8. *Social-emotional competencies.* CASEL (2023) defines social-emotional competencies as five areas (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and

responsible decision-making) that can be applied to children and adults for human growth.

9. *Self-Awareness.* An individual's ability to observe and understand their behaviors, emotions, and thoughts in the context of their environment is a trait that can be developed (CASEL, 2023).

10. *Self-Management.* Being able to control your emotions, thoughts, and actions in various circumstances is known as self-management (CASEL, 2023).

11. *Social Awareness.* Comprehending the perspectives, emotions, and ideas of one's peers is an incredibly valuable skill. It involves being aware of diversity, understanding social norms, and respecting others' boundaries (CASEL, 2023).

12. *Relationship Skills*. These are the abilities to utilize essential relationship abilities to ensure a healthy relationship with people within the environment. It involves the aptitude to effectively interact, resolve conflicts, and join minds with others (CASEL, 2023).

13. *Responsible Decision-Making*. It is a person's aptitude to act ethically and rationally decide on different situations (CASEL, 2023).

Summary

Social and emotional learning is a topic discussed much in education. Research has focused on the importance of SEL and its impact on students (Cristóvão et al., 2017; Greenberg, 2023; Weissberg, 2019). Teachers are asked to implement a SEL program in their daily curriculum to increase positive student outcomes. Therefore, it is imperative to consider and understand how teachers feel about SEL, as they are the experts in delivering the approach. Having a better understanding of how elementary teachers feel about SEL and the effects it has on the students from their experiences will allow the school district to look more into what needs

to be done to help their teachers be trained, prepared, confident, positive, and eager when implementing the program (Kaspar & Massey, 2022).

This qualitative phenomenological approach examined teachers' perceptions of SEL and the impact it has on students' social and emotional competencies from their experience implementing the program. This chapter included the introduction and the problem, following the research questions, the significance of the study, the definition of terms, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The following selection will include a review of research to understand the depth of SEL and teachers' perceptions using different variables.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

Social and emotional learning is the academic procedure of introducing significant skills relevant in developing a skillful individual who can manage emotions, build healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2023). SEL significantly attains five competencies relevant to human development. These competencies include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Lawson et al., 2018). These competencies are critical to academic and personal success and are essential for positive social and emotional development.

Teacher's design SEL programs to help individuals acquire these competencies and develop the skills necessary to maneuver around life and school. SEL programs are typically integrated into the school curriculum significantly to assist students to learn extra lessons. Teachers are obligated to utilize evidence-based strategies to help students develop social and emotional skills (Lawson et al., 2018). These strategies can include role-playing, modelling, and explicit instruction in social and emotional skills. There are studies done on SEL programs which prove without a doubt that the incorporation of the programs can have a positive impact on student's academic and personal development (Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; Hurd et al., 2021). SEL programs can improve academic achievement, reduce disruptive behavior, and improve students' social-emotional skills. These programs can also help to create a positive school climate, improve teacher-student relationships, and increase student engagement.

In recent years, management from multiple schools has developed recognition of the impact SEL has on different students. Many schools and districts have implemented SEL

programs, and there has been an increase in research to develop a rationale for the effectiveness of these programs. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), during the 2021-2022 academic school year, 76% of principals and 53% of instructors reported using SEL programs and curricular materials nationally (Schwartz et al., 2022). In a survey conducted in 2018, 72% of school administrators reported that SEL implementation was one of the school's top priorities (Hamilton et al., 2019). However, there is still much to learn about the best ways to implement and sustain effective SEL programs and how to support teachers in incorporating SEL into their teaching practices.

SEL is a critical component of academic and personal success. SEL programs are designed to help individuals develop the skills necessary for positive social and emotional development, and research has shown that these programs can have a positive impact on academic achievement and personal development (Haynes, 2021). As the importance of SEL continues to be recognized, it is important to continue to explore effective ways to implement and sustain SEL programs and to support teachers in incorporating SEL into their teaching practices.

Theoretical Framework

SEL has been an approach that educational settings have used to bolster student emotional well-being. There are several theories that advocate for SEL and its influence on the students. The theoretical framework that guided this study is The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Framework (CASEL, 2023). In research, frameworks are used as a major tool to provide structure and relate new findings with current knowledge (Brush et al., 2021). Frameworks provide critical components to the study as they lay the

foundation and offer a guide for the analysis (Grant et al., 2014). The context from the CASEL

framework has been recognized widely from its usage in education.

In relation to SEL, the CASEL framework provides an outlook for the knowledge and

skills students will gain as well as an indicator of how and when it is expected to assist them

throughout the program. Researchers allege teachers could promote good academic

accomplishment and positive student development by utilizing CASEL abilities (Cristóvão et al.,

2017). Other studies have also demonstrated teaching CASEL abilities to students in the

classroom encourages growth while lowering problem behaviors and raising academic

achievement (McCormick et al., 2015, McCormick et al., 2019). Adopting SEL using the

CASEL framework motivates teachers to help their students be knowledgeable on specific

abilities in the curriculum.

Related Literature

History of CASEL and SEL

SEL refers to the pedagogical approach aimed at imparting students with the necessary

abilities to cultivate their engagement as productive members of society, enabling them to

establish significant interpersonal connections, collaborate effectively with others, and overcome

daily obstacles (McKown, 2017). The historical narrative of the SEL movement revolves around

a concept which is both straightforward and impactful. CASEL (Collaborative for Academic,

Social, and Emotional Learning) has emerged as a prominent advocate in the educational

landscape, spearheading a progressive initiative to incorporate Social and Emotional Learning

(SEL) as an essential component of the educational framework. In 1968, a program was initiated

by Dr. James Comer and his colleagues at Yale University's Child Study Center with the aim of

implementing their concepts on comprehensive assistance for the holistic development of

children (CASEL, 2023) Two schools in New Haven, Connecticut, implemented this curriculum. Both institutions saw fewer behavioral challenges and higher academic achievement than the state average by the early 1980s (CASEL, 2023). According to Borowski (2019) the concept of "Social and Emotional Learning" originated from a conference held in 1994, which was organized by the Fetzer Institute. The meeting was comprised of individuals from the academic community, including researchers, educators, and child advocates, who are actively engaged in diverse educational initiatives aimed at fostering favorable growth and advancement in children. Commencing in 1994, the nonprofit organization embarked on its mission with a primary emphasis on fostering cooperation. Over time, their efforts yielded significant growth, expanding from a modest conference held in New Haven to establishing relationships around the nation and garnering a widespread audience spanning the world (Borowski, 2019).

CASEL has played a prominent role in the worldwide initiative and has established itself as a reputable authority in the swiftly expanding field of SEL (Dermody et al., 2022). Despite the increasing breadth of their efforts, their work continues to be rooted in their longstanding collaboration aimed at fostering the holistic growth and well-being of children. The narrative around SEL dates back to the earliest instances of teacher-student interactions. The principles of SEL are inherent in all compassionate and cooperative relationships and are evident in the alliances formed among students, educational institutions, families, and communities across many historical contexts (McMain, 2023).

The manager of the New Haven Public Schools, John Dow, Jr., used the statistics to argue the need for a district-wide program of social growth. Between the years 1987 and 1992, an assemblage of educators and scholars, under the guidance of Timothy Shriver and Dr. Roger P. Weissberg, initiated the New Haven Social Growth Program (Weissberg & Shriver, 1995).

This program served as a trailblazer in implementing SEL practices in K–12 educational settings. During a similar period, Dr. Weissberg, in collaboration with Dr. Maurice Elias, assumed the role of co-chair for the W.T. Grant Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social Competence (McBride, 1994). This initiative aimed to assemble respected scholars in order to provide a comprehensive framework for fostering social and emotional abilities within educational settings.

In 1994, a dedicated cohort of individuals convened with the objective of establishing an academic discipline that would effectively tackle the educational aspect which had been previously overlooked (Borowski, 2019). The multidisciplinary cooperation included academics, educators, practitioners, and child advocates who held the belief schools had a responsibility to address the social and emotional needs of all students. The collective emerged from their deliberations with a designated appellation and a defined objective: The acronyms CASEL and the phrase "social and emotional learning" were conceived.

The objective of CASEL, both truly and directly, is to set up the integration of high-quality, evidence based SEL as a crucial component of instruction from preschool to high school (CASEL, 2023). The subject of SEL was formally characterized in 1997 through the collaborative endeavors of nine people related to CASEL. These collaborators co-authored a distribution titled "Advancing Social and Enthusiastic Learning: Rules for Teachers." In the ensuing decades, a considerable body of inquiry has proven the adequacy of SEL in advancing scholastic accomplishment and long-term victory among students (Borowski, 2019). Notably, the need for SEL has increased among numerous partners, counting instructors, school leaders, district directors, officials, guardians, managers, and students themselves (Weissberg, 2019). There is a developing trend among instructional teachers at all levels, counting schools, districts,

and states, to grasp and execute evidence based SEL practices in order to adjust to their local objectives.

Currently, there exists an unparalleled surge in demand for an instructive system that comprehensively cultivates students' social, emotional, and scholarly advancement. The expansion of the SEL movement has generated an increased need for well-defined directives, practices grounded in empirical research, and ongoing educational development. According to the Kentucky Board of Education Department (2023), CASEL and its collaborators are prepared to address the current situation. Decades of empirical data derived from rigorous research studies and practical application in real-world settings unequivocally demonstrate the existence of a well-defined trajectory for progress. The collaboration endeavors to integrate a diverse array of knowledge and practical skills in order to sustain the advancement of research, facilitate the implementation process, provide insights for policymaking, and establish networks to promote the widespread adoption of SEL initiatives.

<div align="center">**Core Competencies**</div>

The basis of CASEL focuses on developing five core competencies critical to academic and personal success. These competencies include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. There is a need to understand the structure of social and emotional learning and the five core components in detail (CASEL, 2021).

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the ability of an individual to comprehend one's behaviors, emotions, and thoughts within a relative environment. Self-awareness is essential in human interaction as it lays a foundation for an individual to significantly develop other competencies (Lawson et al.,

2018). Self-awareness enables individuals to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, understand their emotions, and regulate their behavior. According to research, self-awareness is associated with better academic performance, improved social skills, and reduced behavioral problems in students (Jones, et al., 2017).

Self-Management

Self-management is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. It involves the ability to manage stress, control impulses, and set goals. Self-management skills are essential for academic success, as they enable students to manage their time effectively and stay focused on their goals (Collie et al., 2015). Research has shown students with better self-management skills are more likely to achieve academic success and have better mental health outcomes (Lawson et al., 2018).

Social Awareness

Social awareness is one's ability to comprehend and empathize with peers' emotions, perspectives, and ideas. It involves the ability to recognize and appreciate diversity, understand social norms, and respect others' boundaries. Social awareness is essential for building positive relationships with others, and research has shown students with better social awareness skills have higher levels of empathy and are less likely to engage in bullying behaviors (Jennings, 2016). The same study shows teachers can more easily introduce tasks for students if they can empathize with their emotions. For instance, some students get bullied based on their age, gender, or race. Such students can benefit from appropriate programs that teach them empathy and improves their social-emotional competency within the school environment.

Relationship Skills

Relationship skills are the ability to utilize essential relationship abilities to ensure a healthy relationship with people within the environment. It involves the ability to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and work collaboratively with others. Strong relationship skills are essential for academic success, as they enable students to work effectively in groups and collaborate with their peers. Research has shown students with better relationship skills are more likely to have positive social outcomes and are less likely to engage in problem behaviors (Durlak et al., 2011). Problem behaviors refer to issues such as being engaged in fights or bullying activities that showcase poor relationship behaviors within the school environment.

Responsible Decision-Making

Responsible decision-making is one's ability to act ethically and make rational decisions in different situations. It involves the ability to identify problematic situations, analyze situations, and evaluate the consequences of different choices. Responsible decision-making is essential for academic success, as it enables students to make informed decisions about their academic and personal lives. Research has shown students with better decision-making skills are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and are more likely to have positive social outcomes (Durlak, 2016). Research shows students who acquire responsible decision-making skills will end up being on the right side of a situation since they evade situations that might put them in trouble (Lodge et al., 2018).

<div align="center">

Importance of SEL

</div>

In the field of education, a major shift has taken place as stakeholders recognize the importance of social and emotional awareness rather than just cognitive abilities. The focus of

SEL in education is to provide students with essential life skills to meet expectations in both the academic and personal domain (Brush et al.,2022). As stated by Gimbert et al. (2023), SEL comprises a variety of competences, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making. The acquisition of these skills is of utmost importance in effectively navigating the intricacies of contemporary life fostering positive interpersonal connections and attaining holistic wellness life. SEL appears to have a significant effect on a variety of student outcomes.

The positive impact SEL has on academic performance is one of its essential focal points. A meta-analysis of over 400 inquiries by Cipriano et al. (2023) found that students who took part in these sorts of programs outperformed their peers by scoring 11 points more in terms of scholastic accomplishment. SEL makes a difference. Students show improvement in time management skills when they are instructed on goal setting and managing their possessive impulses. Cipriano et al. (2023), research findings indicate schools adhering to the CASEL framework exhibited improved peer connections. Similarly, programs aligned with the Framework for Teaching indicated enhanced peer relationships and a decrease in emotional distress among students. The findings have significance in expanding our understanding of the impact of SEL interventions on students' academic, social, and emotional development. (Jagers et al., 2018). There is a possibility that an extensive set of acquired abilities might yield comparable advantages for students; nonetheless, a more thorough investigation is necessary. It is imperative for SEL programs to provide detailed information on the particular sequence and material provided when reporting results to facilitate future research and untangle the effects of sequence and content.

According to Cipriano et al. (2023,), prioritizing the instruction of emotional skills above social skills yields the most significant outcomes in SEL interventions. The significance of these findings should not be undermined, despite the constraints imposed by the limited and best available data for this analysis. These results emphasize the opportunity for SEL to improve its efficacy by taking a more nuanced approach to varying program features, including instructional content and order. In recent years, emotional intelligence (EI) has gained much attention. One explanation that brings this attention is the impact emotional intelligence has on interactions between people by supporting social skills (Trigueros et al., 2020). Being emotionally intelligent or having a high EI score better equips students to understand others and their feelings. This then help student to better regulate other skills such as social skills, self-control, and empathy (Trigueros et al., 2020).

Additionally, SEL greatly aids students' emotional intelligence. Cognitive insights emphasize the capacity to appropriately distinguish, decipher, oversee, and viably utilize one's feelings. Students create the capacity to recognize and comprehend their own and others' feelings through the application of SEL skills. Improved communication and conflict resolution abilities are two outcomes of such an environment. According to Gimbert et al. (2023), SEL is a crucial aspect that should receive significant attention throughout the educational journey of every child. Further, Gimbert et al. (2023), stated, Carstarphen, the former Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools, asserts the need to foster SEL training and professional development among professional educators. Carstarphen emphasizes that by ensuring each child has a constant and loving adult, a sense of hope may be instilled. A considerable amount of research shows that SEL interventions enhance student conduct. However, there is a lack of studies looking at how educators may assist students in building SEL in their daily lives.

Though CASEL provides a framework for cultivating psychologically healthy and productive students, there is a lack of understanding among policymakers and educational administrators about how to improve teachers' understanding of SEL and corresponding behavioral competencies. The broad spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the national drive to abolish racism have posed challenges to education. On average, 79 instructional school days were missed during the Covid-19 pandemic in many countries (Mazrekaj & De Witte, 2023). Although the number of missed instructional days differed by country, the pandemic affected nearly 55 million students in the United States from kindergarten through 12th grade (Golberstein et al., 2020). Schools are typically the primary source for social activities and competency improvement (Almeida et al., 2021). The closing of schools during the pandemic have been linked to many factors that contributes to mental health issues such as loneliness, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Mazrekaj & De Witte, 2023). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released that 87% of public schools reported how their students social-emotional development was negatively impacted during the 2021-2022 school year due to COVID-19 (NCES, 2022). As a result, teachers are actively seeking out expert guidance on how to provide students with meaningful SEL opportunities.

The benefits of SEL extend beyond the school environment. Research has shown that previously in education, interventions and strategies were already put in place to focus on students emotional and behavioral problems that was diagnosed with having a mental health disorder (Greenberg et al., 2017). Implementing a schoolwide SEL approach would help reach students not only who are diagnosed with mental health problems but all students by using strategies that promote SEL competencies (Greenberg et al., 2017). SEL programs enables students to learn social, emotional, and behavioral skills that will guide their decision making

and prevent mental health problems (Cook et al., 2015). Children and adolescents having mental health issues can lead to poor academic skills, disruptive behaviors, absenteeism, and suspensions (Panayiotou et al., 2020). Mental health illness in the youth can also result in long term effects to include unemployment, reliance on social services, and engagement in the criminal judicial system. Therefore, integrating and promoting SEL programs will help to address students' mental health, The emphasis on self-awareness and emotional regulation that SEL promotes may help students develop resilience and coping mechanisms. A longitudinal study of adolescents who had received SEL therapies showed that anxiety, depression, and social stress were all reduced (Sandilos et al., 2023,). High-quality teacher-student interactions involve instructors engaging in regular, growth-promoting talks with their students. When students and teachers work together, everyone in the classroom benefits from a sense of safety and care, and the teacher is better able to cater to each student's unique learning requirements. Facilitating student learning also requires creating interactions that are instructionally useful (Sandilos et al., 2023, Teachers and students might exchange ideas, provide one another with constructive criticism, build bridges between previously learned material and new concepts, and introduce students to new words.

Researchers have shown a correlation between teachers' self-reported closeness with students and their use of universal SEL interventions in the classroom (Sandilos et al., 2023). These connections are consistent with the conceptual frameworks for SEL curricula, which place an emphasis on the need to help educators develop their interpersonal and managerial skills. Furthermore, SEL develops children's empathetic and caring natures. In today's culture the ability to think critically from multiple perspectives is more vital than ever. SEL interventions encourage perspective-taking and developing a sense of community and acceptance (Dermody et

al., 2022). Scholarly achievement, passionate insights, mental well-being, and compassion are all reinforced by SEL programs, by giving students the apparatuses, they need to exceed expectations in school and in life. As the teaching scene advances to suit the demands of the 21st century, SEL acts as a compass, directing students toward a brighter and more sincerely mindful future (Dermody et al., 2022). Participation in evidence based SEL programs and workshops has been shown to move a wide range of capacities, including self-awareness, self-management, social mindfulness, social aptitudes, and capable decision-making (Denham, 2018). Students and grown-ups who have these aptitudes are superiorly able to create a sound sense of personality, manage emotions, set and accomplish goals, build and keep solid relationships and make moral and caring choices (Dermody et al., 2022).

SEL Benefits

Recently, a broader perspective on education has gained support, one that places greater importance on things outside of standardized test results. It has been argued by Beyer (2017, p.2) that "social and emotional learning" (SEL) has become an "important framework" for teaching children "vital life skills" beyond the curriculum. Benefits of SEL include improved academic performance, increased emotional intelligence, enhanced mental health, and the cultivation of more fulfilling relationships with peers and adults. This development has been connected to SEL's emphasis on building foundational skills, including self-regulation, goal setting, and time management (Cristóvo et al., 2017).

The positive impacts of SEL on students' schoolwork stretch well beyond the realm of emotions. Cristóvo et al. (2017) have demonstrated the value of SEL in encouraging students' development and academic achievement. Extensive research indicates that teaching students social and emotional learning skills can have a favorable effect on their general development and

the frequency of any negative behaviors, as well as on their academic achievement and civic involvement (Alzahrani et al., 2019). Multiple in-depth studies on a worldwide scale have identified programs and activities that promote SEL (Elfield et al., 2015; Berkowitz et al., 2017; Duckworth and Carlson, 2013; Duckworth et al., 2010; Durlak et al., 2011; McCormick et al., 2015). This development has been connected to SEL's emphasis on building foundational skills, including self-regulation, goal setting, and time management (Cristóvo et al., 2017).

Emotional intelligence, or the ability to recognize, understand, and control one's own and other people's emotional responses, is a key factor in achieving success in many spheres of life. It is difficult trying to control and manage one's feelings when he is not consciously aware of his emotions and does not understand them (Edara, 2021). Therefore, being able to identify and control one's emotions, and recognize other's feelings is correlated with effectiveness, resiliency, and wellbeing (Storey-Hurtubise et al., 2021). SEL focuses particularly on developing students' introspection, compassion, and interpersonal skills. Students' communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork skills are all enhanced with SEL interventions, as emphasized by Baez et al. (2023). The purpose of SEL is to teach children how to recognize and manage their emotions so they may go on to focus on topics such as resilience, violence prevention, wellness, and character education. SEL may be seen as a framework for organizing many aspects of success, with the ultimate aim of meeting all students' academic and social education needs (Baez et al., 2023). Cristóvo et al. (2017, p.3) state "there is a unified vision for SEL that pushes children to develop to their maximum potential." They further claim this objective may be accomplished in a number of ways, with the most advancements being the emphasis set on specific subjects to ensure that these themes are given with high quality inside a school.

The significance of students' emotional well-being within the classroom cannot be exaggerated. It has been shown that SEL interventions increase students' mental health (Colomeischi et al., 2022). Following the procedures mentioned by Kagstrom et al. (2023) a mental health literacy intervention was conceived, produced, and piloted in Czech schools. They explore how to use the theory of change (TOC) to systematically plan, develop, and evaluate a comprehensive intervention to improve people's knowledge of mental health. The results from the study indicate collaborating with stakeholders enhances effective interventions focusing on mental health programs during an iterative process (Kagstrom et al., 2023) The emotional health of students can be improved by SEL interventions (Kutcher et al., 2016; Mcluckie et al., 2014). The interventions benefit students' mental well-being and should be implemented in schools. Although evidence of specific SEL content that contributes to promoting social and emotional skills in children and adolescents is more robust, research exploring specialized material for Mental Health Literacy (MHL) is less established (Kagstrom et al., 2023.

SEL can help students since it offers them coping mechanisms for difficult emotions and strategies for overcoming setbacks. It is probable to implement cost-effective and impartial interferences for psychological health and comfort in schools (Greenberg et al., 2017), and doing so shows a positive impact on the whole school community. If teachers are given the right tools and guidance, mental health initiatives may be carried out successfully (Kagstrom et al., 2023). Teachers are in a good position to help troubled students who can benefit from professional counseling due to their daily interactions with them. Classroom disruptions caused by mental health concerns can be reduced by early detection and referral owing to MHL education (Kagstrom et al., 2023).

One of the major impacts of SEL is to impart these competencies on students. Students who persevere to comprehend and sympathize with their colleagues are more likely to work well, collaborate and communicate efficiently. Su et al. (2023) state that SEL helps students feel more included and accepted in school. This creates a tranquil, educational environment for those involved. Several high-quality SEL cultivation programs have been established in response to local experiences and cultural factors, demonstrating the universal consensus on the necessity to build social and emotional competence. The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (YCEI) promotes the Ruler SEL practice, which entails the following sets of skills: 1) recognizing one's own and others' emotions; 2) understanding the causes and consequences of emotion; 3) accurately labeling emotions; 4) appropriately expressing emotions, and 5) effectively regulating emotions (YCEI, 2022)

Previous studies have demonstrated that the implementation of the RULER program resulted in enhancements in SEL for both instructors and students (Bailey et al., 2023; Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Nathanson et al., 2016). Additionally, this program fostered an environment characterized by emotional support and effective communication within the school and classroom settings. Moreover, it facilitated the cultivation of respect among students toward their peers, instilled discipline, and yielded improvements in academic achievement. The United Kingdom government has provided funding for an SEL initiative that has demonstrated effectiveness in promoting SEL inside educational institutions in Britain (Wood, 2022). The use of three key tactics, namely school-wide promotion, in-class instruction, and teachers' professional development has yielded positive outcomes and notable enhancements in student conduct and academic performance inside educational institutions.

Although there are variations in the conceptual framework and implementation of SEL across different nations, the research findings consistently support the significance of SEL in the context of school instruction and learning. These findings underscore the relevance of SEL in enhancing the quality of teaching, fostering personal accomplishment, and promoting student development within the realm of primary education. According to Su et al. (2023), empirical evidence suggests that SEL may be effectively imparted, shown, and cultivated through the implementation of structured curriculum design and instructional strategies Adolescence represents a critical phase in the acquisition of social-emotional competencies. Given the emphasis placed on lifelong learning and the cultivation of future talents within the core literacy-based curriculum reform, it is imperative for educational institutions to prioritize the enhancement of students' social-emotional competencies.

SEL extends beyond traditional education by prioritizing the cultivation of essential life skills that contribute to the holistic development of students (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). The advantages of SEL extend widely, encompassing enhanced academic achievement, heightened emotional intelligence, greater mental well-being, and the cultivation of healthy interpersonal connections. As the field of education undergoes ongoing transformations, the incorporation of SEL into the curriculum presents an avenue for fostering students' comprehensive development and equipping them with the necessary skills for triumph in their academic pursuits and future endeavors (CASEL, 2023).

In order to ensure that students receive a high-quality education and that supportive learning environments are created, teacher preparation is essential. Teachers who have received appropriate training and are adequately prepared have enhanced abilities to address the varying needs of students, provide significant learning opportunities, and make good contributions to the

holistic development of learners (Molyneux, 2021). The process of teacher preparation includes a blend of scholastic coursework, hands-on training, pedagogical methodologies, and a significant focus on SEL. Teachers are the most influential people in education because they help students learn academically and take care of their emotional growth. However, the burden of their duties often causes stress levels that are on par with or even higher than those seen in industries with high-pressure levels, like healthcare (Agyapong et al., 2022). Numerous things contribute to this stress, such as the mounting classroom expectations, student behavior issues, and the impending specter of standardized testing. According to research, SEL interventions help teachers become less stressed and burned out while developing their emotional intelligence, empathy, and communication skills (Oliveira et al., 2021). The intervention also benefit teachers' well-being, classroom dynamics, and students' academic performance (Jones & Doolittle, 2017). Today's schools are becoming more diverse, emphasizing the necessity for culturally sensitive SEL training. SEL training helps with empowering teachers since it may lower their stress levels, help them manage the classroom well, and make the classroom a more welcoming and encouraging place for learning.

Teachers have a significant impact on how their student's growth academically and emotionally. The extreme stress that educators face is one strong argument in-service training in SEL. Research supports the perception that teaching is one of the most demanding occupations in the human services sector (Kariou et al., 2021). According to research (Tamminga et al., 2023), stress levels among healthcare professionals are like or even higher than those of teachers, suggesting that teachers and healthcare workers have similar stress levels. Numerous variables, including high stakes standardized testing, student behavioral issues, and increased expectations in the classroom, may be blamed for this stress. Teachers who get SEL training can handle and

negotiate these challenges better. SEL interventions have been repeatedly shown to be effective in lowering stress and burnout among educators by the CASEL (Oliveira et al., 2021). SEL promotes teachers' well-being and positively influences classroom dynamics and student results by developing their emotional intelligence, empathy, and communication skills.

A fundamental problem supported by a wealth of studies is the need for more attention on providing teachers with the information and skills they need to support their student's social and emotional competency and create welcoming classroom settings (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2022; Katz et al., 2020; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). This disparity is brought to light by Lawson et al., (2019) which shows that most US teacher preparation programs need to sufficiently integrate the fundamental elements of research-based social-emotional learning programs into their curriculum. Because of this lack of prior preparation, many instructors graduate without the necessary skills to meet their students social and emotional needs. Moreover, teachers without SEL training often find it challenging to control classroom behavior, which causes disturbances that impede their students' progress (Gueldner et al., 2020). In addition to hurting student progress, a deficiency in positive classroom management techniques also increases teacher fatigue and attrition.

The widespread lack of readiness among educators to confront the complex issues of mental health and classroom management highlights the urgent need for SEL training. A substantial majority of teachers believe they are ill-prepared to deal with mental health difficulties among students, according to O'Farrell et al., (2023) which carried out a comprehensive evaluation of teachers' opinions of impediments to the assessment of mental health in schools. The teachers said that their lack of training in identifying and resolving mental health issues made it challenging to provide the students with needed help. Robinson et al.

(2023) further confirms that classroom management concerns are a major cause of teacher stress. The study involved a qualitative review of teachers' experiences during the COVID-19 epidemic. According to the study, teachers who struggle to control behavior in the classroom report higher levels of stress, which may eventually lower their efficacy as instructors. The research is detailed to improve their ability to handle mental health issues and classroom behavior successfully, teachers—more than any other professional group—need thorough SEL training.

Teachers are uniquely positioned to identify and help students with serious adjustment issues and disruptive behaviors. The need to provide teachers with specialized training and professional development in SEL is highlighted by this unique function. According to Greif Green et al. (2017) teachers are vital in identifying social and emotional problems in students. They are early indicators of such concerns since they are often the first to identify symptoms of such disorders, such as behavioral abnormalities, anxiety symptoms, and social disengagement. Even with their critical role, teachers often feel unprepared to provide helpful assistance. Moreover, stress, burnout, anxiety, and depression occur every day among teachers, according to a scoping review (Agyapong et al., 2022), highlighting the substantial influence of these conditions on the teaching profession. In addition to negatively affecting the learning environment, ineffectively addressing disruptive behaviors increases teacher fatigue and attrition (Speakes-Lewis et al., 2022). Additionally, SEL training for instructors has been shown to improve classroom management, decrease behavioral concerns, and increase student engagement, according to the CASEL (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Teachers who complete SEL training will better deal with disruptive behaviors and provide a good learning environment for their students, improving their well-being and academic results.

The substantial impact of student-teacher connections on academic and socioemotional outcomes is a crucial justification for offering SEL training to teachers. The intricate interactions between these variables in student performance are shown in research (Henry et al. 2020), which shows how Black-White achievement disparities change based on family socioeconomic status from early infancy through early adolescence. Teachers with SEL training can better relate to their students, communicate clearly, and create a good learning environment (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). This improved relationship fosters a more encouraging learning environment and lowers the likelihood of behavioral problems. Additionally, the SEL approach emphasizes the value of empathy and active listening, which fosters a more inclusive and respectful classroom culture and improves student-teacher connections (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). SEL instruction improves the rapport between students and teachers, creating a more encouraging classroom atmosphere (Molyneux, 2022).

The growing variety of students in today's classrooms is another strong reason for SEL training in the teaching setting. Teachers are instructing students from different social, cultural, and economic origins, each with different emotional and social requirements. Research focusing on equity-based methods in urban schools, such as that conducted by White et al. (2020), emphasizes the significance of comprehending teachers' perspectives of effectiveness in social and emotional learning (SEL). This study highlights how important it is for educators to have culturally sensitive SEL training to guarantee that their students' emotional needs may be met. By improving their cultural competency, educators may better establish inclusive and fair learning environments, encouraging student accomplishment and societal cohesion. Culturally sensitive SEL training is required in light of the growing variety of classrooms to meet the specific social and emotional requirements of children from different backgrounds (Donahue-

Keegan et al., 2019). It eventually fosters improved success and social cohesiveness among all students by promoting inclusive, fair learning environments and improving teachers' cultural competency.

In addition to helping students, SEL training for teachers fosters their professional development and increases their work satisfaction. Research shows how an online stress intervention might improve teacher effectiveness and lessen burnout (Ansley et al., 2021). The study highlights the possibility that these treatments might enhance teachers' well-being. Teachers' general mental health and work satisfaction increase when they learn how to control their emotions and deal with obstacles in the classroom. It, in turn, improves teacher retention and dedication to the field (Buettner et al., 2016). In line with the ideas of lifelong learning and development in the education sector, the cooperative and encouraging character of SEL training also promotes a feeling of professional community and continual progress (Mahoney et al., 2021). Additionally, SEL training prepares educators to meet the unique requirements of each student, modifying their methods to fit a range of personalities and backgrounds (Sugishita, 2019). Teachers may better assist their students' academic and socio-emotional performance by using this individualized teaching approach, thereby increasing student engagement.

With the developing affirmation of the importance of SEL, it is fundamental that teacher training programs prioritize the improvement of educators' capacities to develop social and emotional growth. Teachers who have received training in SEL incorporate a deep understanding of the requirements of building up a classroom climate that is conducive to cultivating SEL and giving help to students. Teachers can organize procedures that cultivate self-awareness, compassion, and capable communication within their educational approaches. Rulyansah (2022,) employs a descriptive exploratory study as a component of a qualitative research methodology.

According to the instructors in the study, there were documented improvements in behavior, student-teacher interactions, and the general classroom climate and the need to include learning in emotional development within teacher training programs was underscored (Rulyansah, 2022). It is evident that educators would benefit from more training and socio-emotional education within the realm of the educational process. One may argue that exerting influence over the teacher has a cascading impact on students, hence enhancing the educational experience and pedagogical practices.

The preparation of teachers is not a singular occurrence but rather a continuous and continuing endeavor. Teachers must engage in continual professional development due to the emergence of new teaching techniques, developments in technology, and evolving student demands (Germuth, 2018). Educators ought to be incentivized and afforded the means to participate in seminars, conferences, and courses as a means of remaining current and augmenting their proficiencies. Educators who possess enough preparation are more inclined to provide dynamic and efficacious learning environments, exerting a favorable influence on the educational experiences and results of their students.

Providing SEL training to teachers is an integral part of their professional growth and a critical step in fostering their well-being as they take on the enormous duty of educating the next generation (Bailey et al., 2019). As we have learned more about the pressures and difficulties students face in the classroom, SEL training is essential rather than optional. It is imperative to invest in teachers' personal and professional development and students' achievement and emotional health by giving them the tools they need to manage stress, improve classroom management, and create inclusive learning environments. As mentioned above, SEL trainings and professional development for teachers may be remarkably beneficial when implementing

SEL to students in the educational setting (Katz et al., 2020). This to helps the teachers cultivate the skills needed and gain much knowledge to effectively implement SEL.

The Impact of Social and Emotional Learning on Teachers

Educators assume a crucial position in the execution and impact of SEL within the educational setting. The comprehension, dedication, and incorporation of SEL concepts by educators have a substantial influence on the emotional development, scholastic achievement, and general welfare of children (Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Educators serve as exemplars for their students. When instructors exhibit emotional intelligence, proficient communication, and empathy in their interactions, there is an increased likelihood that students will acquire and embrace these qualities (Khassawneh et al., 2022). Through the use of SEL principles, educators establish a tangible representation of effectively managing emotions and fostering positive connections. According to Dirsa et al. (2022), instructors have a crucial and strategic position within the realm of education. A teacher plays a crucial role in the field of education since they are responsible for implementing and advancing educational objectives. The inclusion of this educational element has a significant influence on enhancing the caliber of instruction and fostering the development of students' character inside educational institutions. The instructor actively engages with students to impart knowledge in science and technology while cultivating positive values through their leadership and exemplary behavior.

The role of the teacher encompasses aspects of both a parental figure and a spiritual guide, embodying a revered and elevated status (Keiler, 2018). Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the instructor to guide students toward the attainment of wisdom, enrich their intellectual development with profound knowledge, and impart upon them the concepts of everlasting existence and perpetual gratification. The concept of the perfect human being, as

expounded by Ibn Maskawaih, is the focus of the educator's statement (Dirsa et al., 2022). From this perspective, it may be inferred that teachers who do not attain the appropriate level of education are regarded with the same level of esteem as friends or relatives, as they possess the information and cultural insights that can be acquired from them. Hence, instructors fulfill their professional responsibilities by engaging in various educational activities such as instructing, guiding, mentoring, training, appraising, and assessing students. The instructor has a pivotal role in expanding students' cognitive boundaries, enabling them to engage with the broader societal realm and use the knowledge and skills acquired through their educational experiences. A basic component of SEL is the foundation of a secure and supportive school setting (Lawson et al., 2018). Teachers have a significant role in forming the environment of the instructional setting through the foundation of unambiguous rules, the development of a feeling of inclusivity, and the use of straightforward channels of communication. When students encounter a sense of security, they tend to have a more prominent inclination to voice their contemplations, take on challenges, and effectively take part in the process of obtaining knowledge (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015)

According to Van Aalst et al. (2021), teachers have a critical role in forming students' capacity to successfully control their feelings through the unequivocal instruction of aptitudes for passionate control. Mindfulness hones, profound breathing works out, and methodologies for recognizing and overseeing different enthusiastic states helps to be actualized. These capacities not only have a positive effect on students' emotions but also impact how well they can focus and organize themselves for thought. classroom discussions offer students a valuable opportunity to understand other's perceptions, express their thoughts, and improve their ability to communicate effectively. According to Dirsa et al. (2022), educators who actively engage students in discourse pertaining to emotions, empathy, and conflict resolution play a crucial role in fostering

the acquisition of proficient communication skills and cultivating a more profound

comprehension of both personal and interpersonal sentiments.

The function of a teacher holds significant importance in shaping the destiny of a nation,

hence assuming a critical and strategic position. Educators are held in high regard in several

industrialized nations. The weight of the duty placed upon teachers necessitates their position be

accorded the same level of respect as other professional responsibilities. This phenomenon is

observed in industrialized nations such as Japan, where the teaching profession is associated with

generous remuneration (NCEE, 2023). According to Dirsa et al. (2022), it is contended that the

emergence of new changes, encompassing both conceptual ideas and tangible artifacts along

with their components, may be attributed to the intellectual prowess of educators. Numerous

pedagogical concepts produced by educators were embraced and modified to stimulate the

advancement of the nation. In relation to the process of education, it is essential to acknowledge

that the efficacy of a curriculum in establishing rigorous subject standards and attainable goals is

contingent upon the presence of competent educators.

Educators have the capacity to include SEL activities in their instructional strategies to

strengthen fundamental ideas. Possible activities that might be implemented to foster personal

growth and interpersonal skills encompass many methods, such as engaging in reflective writing,

enacting simulated situations, participating in collective dialogues, and undertaking joint

endeavors aimed at cultivating collaboration and fostering the development of relationships

(Darling-Hummond et al., 2020). These activities offer tangible opportunities for students to

apply SEL abilities in authentic, real-world contexts. To promote the self-esteem and academic

accomplishment of their students, it is imperative for instructors to actively engage in the

practice of unconditional teaching for all students (Johnson, 2017). This educational approach

involves embracing students for their authentic selves without any conditions or expectations, therefore including a holistic approach to their learning and development. It has been observed that students who perceive unconditional acceptance from their professors tend to have a greater inclination towards true engagement in the learning process and get satisfaction from intellectually demanding academic endeavors (Mbuva, 2017).

Bullying and disagreements are prevalent issues encountered inside educational institutions. Educators who have received specialized training in SEL have the capacity to effectively tackle these challenges via the cultivation of empathy and the instruction of students in alternative strategies for managing conflicts (Gebresilase & Zhao, 2023). They establish a cultural environment in which disagreements are regarded as occasions for acquiring knowledge and advancing personal development rather than being perceived as negative sources. The concept of SEL recognizes the individuality of each student and respects their specific and diverse social and emotional requirements. Educators who possess a heightened awareness of their students' emotional well-being have the capacity to offer individualized assistance, which may manifest in various forms, such as personalized discussions, supplementary materials, or adapted tasks (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Teachers have a vital role to play in extending SEL outside the classroom. Teachers can support children's emotional growth more comprehensively if they collaborate with parents and other caretakers to introduce SEL principles at home. Denston et al. (2022) substantiate the widespread belief that teachers significantly influence both their students' academic success and their social and emotional development. While the specifics of this effect are murky, it seems to be linked to teachers' private assumptions about their students and their emotional growth. The viability of programs implied to support students' progress in these ranges is altogether affected

by teachers' states of mind toward feelings and students' social-emotional well-being, as well as their information, aptitudes, and competence related to SEL. In cases where instructors consider bliss an unchangeable characteristic, they may be less persuaded to work toward improving their students' social and enthusiastic well-being. Curcio et al. (2023) found that instructors who saw themselves as specialists in alter were more likely to be eager to execute such ventures. The presumption was made that these instructors would feel more competent to make a contrast through SEL.

Teachers' social-emotional proficiency is significant since it may impact both the approach taken to reinforce students' enthusiastic well-being and the way in which teachers connect with students. Instructors who take the time to look at and sharpen their social and passionate competencies pick up important knowledge about how their possessive feelings shape their intuitive relationships with students. They have mastered the art of classroom management and are experts at using nonverbal clues to inspire and encourage their students. Few teachers put a premium on improving their own social and emotional competence while implementing SEL programs (Denston et al. 2022). In the past, curriculum and student discipline were prioritized above developing students' interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities. It was concluded that a teacher's level of social and emotional development and capacity for reflection mattered for the viability of SEL programs.

Since instructors play such a significant role in their students' social and emotional well-being, Denston and colleagues propose it is essential to look into, refine, and consider teachers' claims of social-emotional knowledge and skills. Recent research has validated this need and highlighted the significance of undertaking further studies to better inform and support educators globally (Denston et al., 2022,)

Teachers can have a significant impact on their students' worldviews by emulating a growth mindset themselves, in which failures are viewed as opportunities for improvement (Yu et al., 2022). Instructors' beliefs in their own efficacy or ability to influence student learning may serve as more immediate guidance for classroom activities. Research conducted on high school teachers in the United States and Italy consistently found that instructors' self-efficacy predicted mastery-oriented behaviors aimed at promoting students' progress, while teachers' attitudes did not (Katsantonis, 2019). This illustrates how instructors may miss opportunities to assist those students to develop in spite of their shared belief that students' aptitudes are moldable. Certain instructors, on the other hand, may be more inclined to utilize an assortment of procedures to progress their students' scholastic execution, illustrating confidence in their students' potential for improvement. They predicted only a positive association would exist between teacher efficacy and student disposition, and they found that to be the case (Yu et al., 2022). In keeping with SEL's emphasis on knowing oneself and bettering oneself, this mindset encourages perseverance and an openness to growth via setbacks. SEL relies heavily on teachers making connections for students between classroom theory and real-world application (Sugishita, 2019) They have an effect beyond the confines of the classroom, fostering students' EQ, empathetic skills, and sense of responsibility. Teachers that place emphasis on SEL provide their students with resources that improve their well-being, happiness, and prospects for the future.

SEL Implementation

Atwell and Bridgeland (2019), suggest that creating a school wide SEL strategy prepares the way for SEL training and support, SEL program adoption, the creation of SEL standards and evaluations, and the establishment of partnerships that can help in the promotion of SEL among students. The number of schools with a long-term strategy to promote SEL has also grown, from

43% to 55%, and the percentage of schools with a clear vision statement that integrates SEL has increased by 10 percentage points (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2018). Schools with larger proportions of low-income students tended to have more robust plans in place to ensure the continuation of SEL. According to Cristóvão et al. (2017), SEL is structured on understanding that similar factors are caused by the same problems. Thus, successful school-wide adoption requires incorporating SEL concepts into every aspect of the curriculum. To guarantee a successful implementation, support from school administrators, teachers, students, and parents is essential. When SEL is integrated into the curriculum, students are more likely to remember and use what they learn (Jones et al., 2018). By using this strategy, SEL is integrated into the fabric of their education rather than treated as an afterthought. Curriculum integration has been suggested as a means through which schools may most effectively promote social and emotional learning (SEL) (Ziegenfusz et al., 2022). By infusing SEL principles into existing academic subjects, teachers may more readily include the development of critical life skills in their students' everyday learning experiences. Incorporating SEL into courses can help students achieve in school and beyond (Zieher et al., 2021) owing to this, their students will be capable of acquiring both the academic understanding and the social and cognitive maturity to prosper in a changing globe. By implementing SEL in this way, they are highlighting that it is vital to students' overall development and not a distinct activity.

According to Howard & Ferrari (2022) the SEL model places a stronger emphasis on the reciprocal relationships between an individual's social environment, feelings, and behaviors. In the SEL model, it is likely that references to the working world and careers will be omitted; nevertheless, this is not the case (Hurd & Deutsch, 2017). On the other hand, the model's inclusion of academic issues might be interpreted as the start of a professional development

process that is age-appropriate and has its basis in the formal education system in which children spend a sizable portion of their formative years. Third through fifth grade Australian children are expected to "understand how parents, family, friends, and neighbors supply them with knowledge and influence job choices" (Howard & Ferrari, 2022, p.378). Though it is related to a capability highlighted in the SEL framework, this one is more career oriented. The student's adult influences have affected their academic success.

It is pivotal to give instructors the chance to develop their careers. Teachers should know "what SEL is, why it's imperative within the classroom, and how to educate it most successfully" (Mahoney et al., 2021, p.8). Prepared teachers are vital to the success of SEL programs in schools. Giving instructors the assets, they ought to integrate SEL into their instructional method successfully may have a critical effect on students' improvements in passionate insights, self-awareness, and social aptitudes. Kilag and Susan (2023) looked into how instructional leadership affected teacher growth in a private school setting in the Philippines and found that administrators that model best practices, provide feedback, and support teacher collaboration had a positive impact of professional development for teachers.

The results corroborate the literature's widespread emphasis on instructional leadership's efficacy in raising educational outcomes. Professional development for educators should be a primary focus (Kilag and Susan, 2023) and the challenges of developing effective instructional leadership strategies should be addressed. It is essential for policymakers to invest heavily in and support professional development initiatives that aim to disseminate effective instructional leadership practices. Teacher education programs should incorporate instructional leadership into their curricula to ensure future school administrators adequately assist teachers' professional development.

The incorporation of SEL into instructor-prepared programs is on the rise (Esen-Aygun & Sahin-Taskin, 2017) because of the significance of giving children the social and emotional abilities they require for success in school and in life. The term "school availability" is utilized to allude to a child's level of readiness for school. It suggests a child has created age-appropriate levels of insight, dialect, and social abilities (Alexandre et al., 2022) instructors should have adequate experience and preparation to assist their students and develop emotional awareness necessary to become great citizens in the community.

Although SEL may be integrated organically into different academic disciplines, there are advantages to allocating dedicated instructional time for explicit SEL sessions (CASEL, 2023). The instructional sessions can encompass subject matters such as the identification of emotions, the settlement of conflicts, and the management of stress. The purposeful and focused implementation of SEL involves providing dedicated instructional time for the explicit teaching and practice of specific SEL skills (Van Huynh et al., 2018). According to Wigelsworth et al. (2023), integrating SEL ideas into many topics and activities can be beneficial. However, providing specific lessons focused on important aspects of emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness can further boost students' comprehension and practical application of these essential life skills.

While it is well acknowledged SEL has positive effects on children and teens globally, simply categorizing a program as SEL fails to adequately encompass the diverse range of material it might entail. Now, there is a need for accessible assets for successfully distinguishing and categorizing program fabric, making it troublesome to recognize between diverse regions of the center, such as self-management aptitudes and social aptitudes. The presence of this gap may be a challenge for scholars looking to address the inconstancy in SEL as well as for professionals

who want to recognize programs most appropriate for their particular circumstances. Wigelsworth et al. (2023) initiate the discussion on these concerns by employing a technique to extract and compare the fundamental elements of interventions from a curated list of 13 universally applicable, basic evidence-based programs. This distillation method utilizes the widely referenced 'five core competencies' model proposed by CASEL. The findings indicated the fundamental competencies of CASEL are evident in the programs selected for further analysis. Nevertheless, most programs exhibited discernible focuses, specifically addressing a certain group of abilities. Ștefan et al. (2022) suggest including "core components" might enhance the categorization of social-emotional learning programs, thereby providing more nuanced insights. This recommendation has ramifications for both the implementation of SEL programs and the design of future research evaluating SEL.

SEL Implementation Outcomes on Students

Jones et al. (2018) assert there is a correlation between preschool- and school-based programming in SEL and a range of outcomes, both immediate and enduring. Nevertheless, despite the numerous favorable consequences linked to SEL, such as enhanced academic performance and improved physical and mental health, it is not unusual for educational institutions and companies to observe fewer impactful benefits than anticipated, in contrast to previous empirical findings. According to existing research, it is posited this matter might be attributed, at least partially, to the presence of inconsistent or inefficient procedures in its execution (Damodaran et al., 2022; Mahoney et al., 2018). SEL facilitates the cultivation of self-regulation and goal-setting abilities among students, resulting in enhanced time management and increased concentration on academic pursuits (Lawson et al., 2018). Self-regulated learning refers to a learning approach wherein individuals take responsibility for managing their own

learning process. This strategy includes learners engaging in metacognitive reflection to survey their learning progress and make educated choices on the most successful methodologies to optimize their learning outcomes.

E-learning is a term that is defined and interpreted differently by different people; however, it also known as online learning. It is a combination of learning and electronic, but it is always guided by pedagogy (Khazanchi et al., 2022). The viability of E-learning plans is related to the utilization of self-regulated learning methods since people who have self-regulatory abilities can apply control over their learning. The literature has examined the subject of self-regulated learning abilities. Mixed learning, known as b-learning (or blended learning), is an approach that combines components of conventional face-to-face learning and online e-learning (Dziuban et al., 2018). Mixed learning requires learners to develop a more prominent sense of self-reliance to optimize their learning involvement. Therefore, in prior scholarly works, the acquisition of self-regulated learning abilities has been identified as a crucial component of blended learning. Donahue-Keegan et al. (2019, p.151) say, "Enhancing culturally responsive SEL skill development in teacher preparation programs supports new teachers to develop foundational competencies for maintaining their own health". Therefore, time management and self-evaluation emerged as areas of weakness in the implementation of mixed learning. While there have been prior investigations into self-regulated learning, there is a lack of research on the long-term longitudinal development of self-regulation, specifically among students engaged in blended learning. It is suggested that future research focus on examining the longitudinal impact of the blended learning technique on the development of self-regulated learning skills (Halverson & Graham, 2019).

The importance of self-awareness and self-control is emphasized within the field of SEL (Stickle et al., 2019). Students acquire the capacity to recognize and categorize their feelings, comprehend the variables that inspire these feelings, and successfully direct their reactions in a beneficial way. The capacity to manage emotions is of utmost importance to sustain concentration throughout academic study sessions. Moreover, the establishment of goals is an essential element within the framework of SEL, as emphasized by Hunter et al. (2022). Students are instructed on the importance of establishing realistic and attainable objectives that adhere to the SMART framework, which stands for specified, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound. This methodology assists individuals in deconstructing complex activities into smaller, more manageable components, enhancing the organization and efficiency of their study practices.

Yildiz et al. (2022) delineate a three-step process consisting of forethought, performance control, and self-reflection. The cyclical self-regulation model is employed as a framework for delineating a self-regulated teaching paradigm (Yetkin-zdemir et al., 2020). The initial phase, known as the foresight phase, encompasses the essential components of goal setting and planning, both of which have a significant impact on the teaching process. Goal setting involves the establishment of learning objectives for students, which are intended to be achieved by the conclusion of the instructional period. The objectives that inform the instructional process may pertain to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral growth of the students. Self-regulated instructors establish goals that are unambiguous, attainable, and coherent. If required, these goals might be modified based on the requirements of the students. Conversely, planning serves as the preliminary procedure for achieving educational goals.

The planning phase of this process involves the determination of the course content and the methods via which this material will be delivered (Yildiz et al., 2022). Self-regulated instructors possess the ability to discern the most suitable teaching techniques and resources while considering the inherent organization of the subject matter and the preexisting knowledge of their students. The compatibility of the subject content with the instructional objectives is constantly assessed. Furthermore, self-regulatory instructors engage in meticulous and strategic planning about many aspects of student-related matters, including the allocation of time for instructional activities and the establishment of assessment criteria for their goals (Ozan & Kincal, 2018).

While the initial phase of self-regulation models incorporates goal setting, existing research indicates that instructors typically do not start their preparation process with this activity (McKown, 2017) In contrast, educators primarily prioritize the tasks associated with delineating the subject matter throughout their preparatory efforts. Alt and Naamati-Schneider (2021) note that once educators have established the instructional material, their attention shifts toward selecting appropriate teaching tactics, activities, and learning environments that will effectively engage and involve students in the learning process. Next, the individuals address the process of establishing objectives and delineating the techniques for assessing performance. According to reports, teachers frequently fail to consider the unique traits and requirements of their students when establishing goals. Furthermore, the aims that have been outlined mostly center around the content. It is worth noting that teachers seldom formulate objectives pertaining to the behavioral development of children.

Summary

In the past, student learning has been solely based off teachers assessing students'
academics through assessments (Kelly, 2018). Therefore, teachers have instructed their students
from a mandated curriculum focusing mainly on academics such as reading, science, math, and
social studies. Due to the expectation of students passing assessments to determine their learning,
teachers devote most of their time teaching the academic portion of the curriculum (Keiler,
2018). Research shows that when a student only learns academically, the education system is not
supporting their full potential and complete abilities (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018).

One of the key factors to improving a student's academics is supporting their social and
emotional development. An effective way of supporting students social and emotional
development is by implementing SEL (CASEL, 2023). SEL is an instructive strategy that
outperforms customary scholarly instruction, conferring fundamental life aptitudes to students
that encourage accomplishment in their educational interests and future endeavors. SEL
advances the improvement of understanding emotions, self-awareness, sympathy, mindful
decision-making, and strong interpersonal abilities (CASEL, 2023). By executing SEL programs
through instructive teaching, there is the potential to have favorable and persevering impacts on
students' educational accomplishments, interpersonal connections, mental welfare, and all-
encompassing advancement (Weissberg, 2019).

The advantages of SEL are diverse and encompass several aspects. Enhanced self-
regulation and goal-setting abilities contribute to improved academic achievement, resulting in
more effective time management and concentrated study habits (Sahranavard et al., 2018). The
cultivation of positive interpersonal interactions and conflict resolution skills facilitated by SEL
contributes to the establishment of a cohesive and harmonious educational setting. The

development of emotional intelligence provides students with the necessary skills to skillfully navigate intricate emotions and circumstance (Trigueros et al., 2020). The successful usage of SEL requires the dynamic interest and collaboration of different partners, including teachers, guardians, directors, and the more extensive community. Through the integration of SEL into the educational modules, the arrangement of comprehensive proficient improvement openings for teachers, and the dynamic engagement of guardians, instructive education creates an environment conducive to the all-encompassing improvement of children, counting their enthusiastic well-being, social abilities, and scholastic accomplishments (CASEL, 2023). SEL encourages the development of basic properties like versatility, adaptability, and enthusiastic well-being among students, preparing them with the essential aptitudes to flourish in an ever-evolving society (CASEL, 2023).

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Studies indicate the positive influence and effectiveness of SEL implementation in the school setting (Corcoran et al., 2018; Sandilos et al., 2022; Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021). The implementation of SEL programs not only help students but teachers also as it creates better

student-teacher relationships, improves classroom management, results in less stress, and fosters positive behaviors (Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Statistics show that a high number of students social-emotional skills were negatively impacted after the pandemic due to school closings, which results to the need for SEL implementation in the classroom setting (Schwartz et al., 2022). Educators also reported the need for a schoolwide SEL program to better the students social-emotional skills and their overall outcome (Hamilton, Doss, and Steiner, 2019). Although there are reports to show the need for SEL, it has been difficult trying to find the best way to implement SEL effectively for positive results in the students (Kaspar & Massey, 2022).

The effectiveness of SEL implementation and the impact it has on students is determined by examining characteristics that are likely to affect teachers' ability to implement the program successfully. Factors that impact teachers' ability to implement SEL effectively includes their understanding of the program, professional development and training, and administration support (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). It is necessary that teachers understand their own perceptions and abilities of SEL practices and instruction. Research has focused much on the effects and benefits of SEL; however, more research is needed on understanding teachers' perceptions of SEL as they implement the program to improve students' overall outcomes (Schonert-Reichl, 2016; Soutter, 2023).

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

This qualitative study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of social and emotional learning (SEL) and its impact on students' social-emotional competencies. The methodological approach selected for this study was a phenomenological analysis to better understand teachers' attitudes and experiences with implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom setting (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Teachers are the professionals expected to apply the SEL approach in their daily curriculum to better students' overall well-being. The success of SEL from the teachers' perspective must be understood. Understanding the teachers' beliefs of SEL's strengths and weaknesses will create space for growth and development and better outcomes for the teachers and students.

Design

The study's chosen methodological approach is a phenomenological one. Qualitative research is a method that interprets data through words versus numbers. It focuses on individual attitudes, feelings, motives, deeds, events, and situations (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Because qualitative researchers serve as the primary research instrument (Patton, 2015) and gather data in the context in which study participants encounter the problem under investigation, qualitative research is also incredibly personal. Additionally, qualitative research aims to realize what a human problem means to different people or groups (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenology approach is best suited for the study as it explores teachers' perspectives from their experiences of SEL implementation. Examining a person's lived experience is the main objective of the qualitative research method known as phenomenology (Neubauer et al., 2019). Phenomenology seeks to explain the significance of an experience by what was experienced and

how it was experienced (Teherani et al., 2015). Because phenomenology entails attempting to grasp the essence of phenomena, it was used as the research methodology for this study. There are different types of phenomenology approaches in qualitative study, transcendental phenomenology is the best-chosen approach for this study. Transcendental phenomenology, also known as the descriptive approach, is used in qualitative research aiming to understand human experience. During the research process, transcendental phenomenology involved four steps to include bracketing, horizontalization, clustering and textualizing (Neubauer et al., 2019). Bracketing means to set aside one's own assumptions and judgement and horizontalization is to treat all participants expressions fair and significant. Clustering took place while participants expressions were categorized while textualizing is writing and in-depth explanation of the phenomena (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Research participants of this phenomenological study had experience implementing social and emotional learning. To collect participants, the researcher used convenience sampling as a technique. When subjects are selected for a study based on their accessibility and convenience to the researcher, the practice is known as convenience sampling (Andrade, 2020). This method used is a type of non-probability sampling that involves members near the researcher, which is sometimes described as "accidental sampling" (Etikan, 2016). Though there are other forms of sampling, this common form of sampling assisted with exploring teachers' views from their experience implementing SEL.

Research Questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the implementation and value of social and emotional learning?

2. What are teachers experiences with implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom?

3. In what ways do teachers believe, through their experience, social and emotional learning implementation improves students' SEL skills and academics?

Setting

To collect participant data for this study, convenient sampling was used. Participants who had experience implementing SEL in the classroom setting for a minimum of two years at the elementary level were selected with care using a recruitment email. Using convenience sampling for the study results in high internal validity when the results are reliable (Andrade, 2020). To achieve high internal validity, relevant participants were utilized to obtain all necessary information for the study (Andrade, 2020). The relevant participants were given access to an online questionnaire so they could answer at their convenience. Utilizing this platform made it possible to collect data from a wide range of people and allowed a geographically diversified sample.

Participants

The researcher recruited participants for this study using convenience sampling by contacting participants via telephone first, asking for their personal emails. A recruitment email was sent out to the participants using the personal emails that were provided. Participants that were identified for the study were those who have worked with the researcher in the past 7 years from one of the school districts where she was employed. This study's target population was elementary teachers with experience implementing SEL in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The participants included teachers who have obtained a provisional or teaching license and are employed in different elementary school environments in different states and have

utilized SEL for at least a whole school year. In phenomenological research all participants have experience with the phenomenon of the study (Neubauer et al., 2019). The phenomenon of this study is having the experience of implementing SEL in the classroom setting for an entire school year. The researcher sought 10-15 teachers both male and female in grades kindergarten through fifth grade to participate in the study. Because educators can begin their teaching careers after finishing college, the age range of participants was expected to vary, which started at 21 years of age to retirement age. The researcher got participants who were from different ethnic groups and cultures that taught at various schools with diverse populations.

Procedures

Before conducting this phenomenological study, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved all necessary forms and documents. The documents that were reviewed for approval by IRB included the recruitment email, consent form, and the questionnaire. Included with the questionnaire was information needed from participants to facilitate a follow-up audio-recorded interview via zoom if requested. After the IRB approved all necessary documents and information for the study, the recruitment process began.

While the focus of the study was to explore elementary teachers' lived experiences implementing Social and Emotional Learning, the researcher used convenience sampling as the method to recruit participants. Enlisting participants using a convenience sample involves identifying and recruiting individuals who are readily available and willing to participate in the study. The researcher has worked in three different school districts in three different states (VA, NC, GA), and has worked closely with teachers who have implemented Social and Emotional Learning. The researcher reached out to the potential participants through personal networks to communicate the purpose for contacting them and asking for an active email address. After

receiving their email address, the participants received a recruitment email for the study that clearly communicated the purpose of the study and all necessary information before they completed the questionnaire. A link was provided in the email that sent them directly to the consent form for them to read, understand and to agree or disagree to be a part of the study. After the participants reviewed, understood, and agreed to participate in the study, the participants begin the questionnaire generated from a software platform (Qualtrics).

The demographic questions identifying the participants and the open-ended questions included in the questionnaire were discussed, reviewed carefully, and approved by the dissertation committee. In the literature, there were similar qualitative interview techniques that examined teachers' perceptions on SEL, but it did not appear there were any that aligned specifically with the purpose of this study. This served as the basis for the decision to create questions that showed participant comparisons and highlighted trends. As the researcher received the completed questionnaires, data was reviewed. After carefully reviewing the data to identify consistency and trends, no requests were made for follow-up interviews due to in-depth responses and clarity from the participants.

The Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the researcher's role was to seek understanding of the participants thoughts and emotions and function as the human instrument (Austin & Sutton, 2014). The role of the researcher can be a very challenging task as questions were asked about perceptions from lived experiences. To the researcher, it appeared that the questions were easy to respond to but to the participants they could have been overwhelming (Austin & Sutton, 2015). Therefore, it was imperative to express the protection of the instruments used in the study to the participants before initiating the research. Considering herself as a change agent, this researcher advocates

for implementation of social and emotional learning not only in the schools she has worked for but all schools. Being a professional school counselor for seven years, has given this researcher the opportunity to work closely with supporting teachers who implement SEL. Although a professional school counselor and an advocate for SEL, this researcher did not engage in any unethical actions. Any assumptions and biases she has on SEL were not interpreted for the data collected. Throughout the process, she was very attentive to her position and the role it played in the study, along with her reflexiveness to remain ethical (Darwin-Holmes, 2020).

Data Collection

There were necessary steps to collect the data for this qualitative study. After selecting the appropriate participants for the study, the researcher kept a log using Microsoft Excel to take note of who the emails were sent to and how many emails were sent. Although pseudonyms were used for participants' identities and all information was confidential, the researcher kept track of all material that related to the study, and it will be erased after three years. Participants had a total of 3 weeks to complete the questionnaire. Although participants completed the study within a week, this timeframe allowed convenience and availability for the researcher and participants. As the participants took the questionnaire, consent to participate was documented first, then responses were automatically saved from clicking the submit button. After reviewing the responses from each participant, the researcher noticed that no follow-up audio recorded interviews were needed. As the participants completed the questionnaire, all responses were downloaded and saved on a USB encrypted flash drive. The USB encrypted flash drive was only used on a password protected computer and stored in a locked cabinet. Having the participants understand the security of their responses helps with higher response rates and less concerns (Wilkins et al., 2019). The recorded responses from the online questionnaire was done in

Qualtrics, a cloud-based software. The benefit of using this methodology was its suitability for

the researcher and the participant. Completing the online questionnaire allowed the participants

to start on the questionnaire and finish later if needed and review their responses before and after

they submitted it. The participants were also able to reflect on their responses and be comfortable

and confident (Trupti Rathi, 2022).

Interviews

In qualitative research, interviews are common as they are used to learn about a person's

experiences, beliefs, and motives (Busetto et al., 2020). They are also valuable tools that gather

detailed understandings and perspectives. Through interviews, researchers can obtain intense and

thorough data because it allows information to be more specific and responses are clearer.

Furthermore, interviews aid in building rapport and provides deeper understandings of the

participants feelings and thoughts (Braun et al., 2020). As this study explored teachers'

perceptions from their lived experiences, interview questions were used to gain the knowledge

and understanding from the participants. Since the dissertation committee is the subject matter

expert, their feedback was given, and the questions were accepted because they aligned with the

goals of the study and the research questions being asked.

Standardized Open-Ended Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Your name.

2. Please select your gender.

3. Please select your age range.

4. What is your race/ethnicity?

5. What state do you work in? Please spell out the state.

6. What type of district do you work in?

7. How many years have you been teaching?

8. What grade do you teach?

9. What environment do you teach in?

10. How many years of experience do you have implementing Social and Emotional Learning?

11. How do you define Social and Emotional Learning?

12. Do you think Social and Emotional Learning should be required to implement in the classroom? Why or why not?

13. Do you think that implementing Social and Emotional Learning should be the responsibility of you, the teacher? Why or why not?

14. How does it make you feel to know that Social and Emotional Learning must be implemented?

15. Is there any benefit, in your opinion, to implementing Social and Emotional Learning?

16. What challenges, if any, have you faced as a teacher when implementing Social and Emotional Learning in the classroom?

17. What specific strategies, if any, have you found most effective when implementing Social and Emotional Learning to your students?

18. What benefits for yourself as a teacher, if any, have you experienced while implementing Social and Emotional Learning, in terms of classroom management, student behavior, and student-teacher relationships?

19. Have you been confident in your ability to apply Social and Emotional Learning? Why or why not?

20. How, if at all, have you been supported in implementing Social and Emotional Learning through appropriate trainings and resources?

21. What considerations do you feel are necessary to effectively implement Social and Emotional Learning?

22. What specific strategies do you believe are beneficial in increasing students' social and emotional abilities and academic achievement through Social and Emotional Learning implementation?

23. What evidence do you use to evaluate the impact of Social and Emotional Learning on students' academic performance and social and emotional skills?

Questions one through ten are demographic questions that are important subjects to the research questions of the study. Demographic questions are used in research to review characteristics of the individuals that are participating, and they help with data analysis (Hughes et al., 2016). Readers will gain a better understanding of the sample and the distinctions and similarities between different research studies by using demographic questions. Research questions are the study's central focus, and it is linked to every other element of the design. The questions should be brief and obvious that the study is a qualitative approach. Using a qualitative approach, most questions will begin with, "What," "How," or "Why" (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019) which leads to questions eleven through twenty-three.

Questions 11 through 15 were open-ended questions that correlated to research question number one. Participants can go deeper into their thoughts and opinions regarding the implementation of SEL with each question posed. Questions 16 through 21 centers on participants providing detailed explanations of their experiences putting SEL into practice. Making meaningful inquiries that were in line with the research questions yielded important

insights. For this reason, it is crucial to ask participants about their lived experiences to gather data applicable for the study (Roberts, 2020). The final two questions, 22 and 23 correspond with the third research question of the study. The focus on the study was discovering teachers' perceptions implementing SEL and the impact it has on students. Using the participant's experiences and observations as a basis, questions 22 and 23 clarified the effects that SEL has on students' academic performance and SEL skills.

Data Analysis

After completing the questionnaire, the analysis process began. The responses were analyzed more than once to gain a clear understanding of the responses. In qualitative research, thematic analysis is one of the analytic approaches used for data. Thematic analysis involves highlighting and recognizing patterns to examine and report themes with the data (Lochmiller, 2021). Moustakas transcendental phenomenology is used as it focuses on the wholeness of the participants' experience setting aside prejudgments. This also included reviewing the responses carefully to identify units and themes and writing a descriptive explanation of the phenomena (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Becoming familiar with data includes reviewing the data over and over. This also included taking notes of necessary and noticeable impressions from the respondents. Generating codes were used in the process to make the data more meaningful. Not all responses to the questions were coded, but essential segments were. Different tools such as Microsoft Excel was used to code from reactions. It is important to pay attention to data to ensure it makes sense.

Trustworthiness

Building rapport is a significant factor in gaining the participants' full participation in the study and for seriousness and truth. The participants was given the researchers contact

information to ask questions for more clarity of the study or any necessary communication about the research. It is explained that the researcher's own biases and pre-assumptions will not be included when analyzing and interpreting the data set. Synthesizing the findings from the respondents is very important and it must align accurately with their life experiences. Direct quotations were used when drawing conclusions to ensure that the themes were honestly from the participants and not made up by the researcher. Also, when the themes were created, notes were be taken for coding to confirm participants thoughts and feelings (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Credibility

To ensure the credibility of the study, discussions with the dissertation chair were carried out that included examining the interpretations and findings correctly. Prolonged engagement with participants allowed for the development of trust as it supports the depth of the data being collected.

Dependability and Confirmability

As the researcher keeps track of all occurrences related to the study through a reflective journal, dependability and confirmability are established. Any personal insights and perceptions that surfaced throughout the process may fall under this category. Furthermore, the researcher conducted multiple reviews and analysis of the gathered data to ensure precise coding and a comprehensive comprehension of the trends.

Transferability

Because convenience sampling was employed in the study, transferability was enhanced. By using convenience sampling, the researcher was able to choose study participants who were most convenient for the research. Participants in the study were elementary school instructors

that implemented SEL for at least an entire year who held a teaching or a provisional license. The participants that were chosen met the needs that were consistent with the study's focus.

Ethical Considerations

The privacy of each participant was confidential, as such pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities. Informed consent was provided to the participants for agreement to participate along with them being able to have their own copies. All materials were properly stored, including the data, by using an encrypted USB flash drive that was stored in a locked cabinet and using a password locked computer that only the researcher had access to.

Summary

Social and emotional learning has been a topic of discussion in many studies (Cook et al., 2015; Greenberg et al., 2017; Haynes; Ph.D., 2021; Kaspar & Massey, 2022; Lawson et al., 2018) SEL is an approach adopted by many school districts to help students with skills needed for human development. The CASEL framework focuses on five core competencies for social and emotional learning to include self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness (CASEL, 2023). Previous research has explored the benefits of social and emotional learning and its effectiveness on students' overall performance in the classroom setting (Alzahrani et al., 2019; Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Colomeischi et al., 2022; Corcoran et al., 2018; (Storey-Hurtubise et al., 2021)

Understanding a teacher's perceptions of social and emotional learning programs and their impact on student's social and emotional competencies is essential as teachers are best situated to observe the implementation and outcomes of SEL programming. This study focused on the impact of teachers' beliefs and attitudes on social and emotional learning. Teachers who were experienced with social and emotional learning were given an interview of open-ended questions

for in-depth responses for a deeper understanding. Utilizing this phenomenological qualitative approach will determine the findings of this study.

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to discover teachers' lived experiences implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom setting and its impact on students. The outcomes of the research that was conducted for the study are summarized in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter offers a description of the educators that took part in the research study that was conducted. By providing a description of the participants, it is easier to comprehend their individuality and how they are connected to the research on the subject. Following the presentation of the analysis of the overall findings, the emergent themes will be discussed. To guarantee the accuracy of the depiction of the participants' stories, direct quotes from them will be displayed.

Participants

After recruiting participants that were suitable for the study, 12 elementary teachers completed the online questionnaire. Of the 12 participants, 77% were female teachers of grades kindergarten through fifth, and 23% were male. Participant demographics were diversified, containing 69% Black or African American, 15% White, and 15% of individuals who identified as two or more races. The participants ranged in age from 21 to 50, with 38% falling into the 31–35 age group, 31% in the 36–40 age group, 15% in the 26–30 age group, and 8% in the 41–45 and 50+ age groups. Of the teachers who took part in the study, 33% work in a Virginia school system, 33% in a North Carolina school system, and 33% in Georgia. All participants have experience implementing Social and Emotional Learning in the classroom setting. In the table below, more detailed information about each participant and their field of expertise is offered. To ensure confidentiality for each participant, pseudonyms were used.

Table 1

K-5 Participants

Participant	Years of Teaching	Grade Level	Class Environment
Diamond	2-5 Years	2nd Grade	General-Ed
Alecia	10+ Years	Kindergarten	General-Ed
Brandon	10+ Years	1st Grade	Self-Contained
Stephanie	6-10 Years	3rd Grade	General-Ed
Jasmine	2-5 Years	3rd Grade	Inclusion
Michelle	10+ Years	5th Grade	General-Ed
Chanelle	10+ Years	2nd Grade	Inclusion
Rachel	6-10 Years	3rd Grade	General-Ed
Brittany	10+Years	4th Grade	General-Ed
Torie	2-5 Years	3rd Grade	General-Ed
Kevin	6-10 Years	Kindergarten	Self-Contained
Thomas	2-5 Years	3rd Grade	Inclusion

Results

Following the gathering of participant data, thematic analysis was used to evaluate the results. The data was viewed and familiarized to identify codes. After coding, three themes were developed from patterns that were noticed repeatedly. Subthemes that related to the material presented in greater detail served as the foundation for the major themes. Table 2 displays a summary of the themes and subthemes that were discovered.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
The Importance of Social and Emotional Learning	Life Skills
	Student Outcomes
	Healthy Relationships
Challenges and Barriers	Time
	Training
	Resources
Building A Supportive Learning Environment	Modeling
	Observation
	Surveys

The Importance of Social and Emotional Learning

All participants apart from one stated that SEL should be required to implement in the classroom setting. Rachel shared that she did not think SEL should be required, "because the average classroom teacher does not have the appropriate time to implement it during the day." Although participants' definition of SEL varied, they all viewed SEL as a process or skill that helps students become aware of and manage their feelings and emotions. Participants explained why they felt SEL should be implemented and stated its importance. Kevin explained that SEL should be implemented because, "SEL inside the classroom can help promote holistic developments of students by addressing their emotional, social, and academic needs." Similar to what Kevin explained, Stephanie shared that, "social and emotional learning should be required

to implement in the classroom because it increases self-awareness, academic achievement and builds relationships." Chanelle stated that SEL should be required because, "mental health has been identified as a real need to maintain an overall healthy lifestyle. Students deal with emotions every day and it is important for students to understand how to interpret their feelings in a way that is appropriate and safe."

Not only did participants explain the need for and importance of SEL implementation but they also expressed feelings of being happy, excited, and understanding why it is implemented at their school. Diamond stated, "I feel excited that we are teaching the whole child brain and not just academics." Kevin and Rachel said that they "feel happy," whereas Thomas and Stephanie said that knowing that SEL needs to be implemented makes them "feel good."

Life Skills

Several of the participants shared that SEL are life skills that help beyond childhood into adulthood. Regarding SEL as a life skill, Jasmine and Brittany made similar remarks. Jasmine stated, "I think SEL is a great idea because most students need these skills to be a successful independent individual," and Brittany stated "SEL are life skills students need to be successful adults." Kevin's in-depth response states that "Skills learned through SEL are not only beneficial during the school years but also contribute to long-term success in adulthood." He continues by sharing, "Requiring SEL in the classroom is essential for nurturing well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but, also emotionally intelligent, socially competent, and resilient in the face of life's challenges." Lastly, Stephanie explained, "SEL teaches the students social and emotional skills that can help them throughout their life."

Student Outcomes

The value of using SEL in the classroom was discussed by the participants. They all shared their opinion on the benefits of having SEL implemented in the classroom. Most of the participants believed that SEL fosters positive student outcomes. Brandon shared that "Student growth and achievement is the ultimate benefit of properly implementing social and emotional learning." Jasmine and Kevin shared related opinions as Jasmine stated, "Social emotional learning has been linked to higher grades and attendance, also integrating SEL into education may foster a positive classroom environment that reduce behavior challenges and enhance academic achievements." Kevin explained that "Implementing SEL may have a transformative impact on student's academic achievement, social and emotional well-being, and overall success in life." Torie, Brittany, and Thomas also shared connected opinions as they shared more about the implementation of SEL having a positive outcome on student's feelings. Torie shared, "I believe that it makes students more effective communicators about how they are feeling and helping others." Brittany stated, "Student are more aware of their feelings and are empathetic to the feelings and needs of others", while Thomas also shared that implementing SEL "teaches students life skills, help students regulate their emotions, and allow them to think through problems instead of blowing up on people."

Healthy Relationships

Participants brought up how SEL implementation fosters positive relationships with students and/or a positive learning environment in the classroom. Many shared that it helps with creating a bond not only with the student and teacher but with students amongst each other. Rachel stated that implementing SEL, "helps students manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, make responsible decisions, and establish and maintain positive relationships. Alecia explains, "SEL helps foster a positive classroom environment

where students feel safe, supported, and valued. Chanelle explained that SEL was important inside and outside the classroom as she states, "Students need SEL to learn how to develop healthy relationships and how to deal with positive and negative interactions with peers and adults before conflict arise." Stephanie shared much about SEL and how it builds healthy relationships. She stated, "SEL helps children learn skills to support healthy development and relationships." Furthermore, Stephanie stated, "SEL increases self-awareness, academic achievement and builds relationships" and "SEL helps the teacher get to know their students needs and it builds relationships with them."

Challenges and Barriers

The majority of participants reported facing numerous obstacles and hurdles that make it challenging to effectively implement SEL, despite their shared belief that SEL should be mandated in schools. Only three out of twelve participants stated that they were confident with implementing SEL. Torie shared that she was confident because "my administration adds it in to our morning meeting and provides the weekly videos and slides we need so it is not extra work on my plate." Stephanie also feels confident as she stated, "I have been confident because my school trained us how to teach social and emotional learning and the program, we use is user friendly" and Brittany also shared feelings of being confident but stated that "there is room to grow". The remaining nine participants admitted to being uncertain or lacking confidence.

Time

Time was frequently brought up by participants as a major obstacle to successfully implementing SEL. They talked about how there was not enough time allotted for SEL in the daily curriculum. Chanelle simply reported, "The challenges I have faced as a teacher implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom is time." Thomas stated that "time

built into the schedule for social and emotional learning" is a major consideration for effectively implementing SEL. Additionally, Torie explained that "Sometimes the material takes a long time to get through when we do not have enough time in our schedule to implement it." Rachel reported that she does not "have the time to complete lessons properly", while Diamond stated, "there is not enough time to teach SEL everyday because the district is more focused on academics." Diamond also stated, "5-15 minutes is not long enough. 30 minutes is necessary for SEL." Michelle and Alecia had similar responses as they both shared that time is necessary when trying to effectively implement SEL. Alecia reported that "Providing time in the instructional schedule for the lessons is very challenging."

Training

Participants shared the need for training when implementing SEL and the evidence of how it will provide the necessary assistance to build a successful program. Not having the proper training before implementing SEL in the classroom resulted in the participants feelings of not being confident when teaching the lessons. Kevin reported, "I think my confidence in applying SEL can be enhanced through more knowledge, trainings, and practice." Though Kevin shared that he did attend professional development on SEL, "One time wasn't enough." Additionally, Kevin stated, "As a special education teacher, at times I have challenges accessing adequate resources and trainings to effectively implement SEL inside the classroom." Rachel and Jasmine feel that SEL training should come from the counselors because they are already taught how to implement SEL, while Alecia states that she would feel more secure implementing SEL if there were "more training to provide more strategies for me to use with a diverse group of students."

Resources

When attempting to implement SEL, teachers reported having insufficient resources. Kevin and Brandon both teach students in a self-contained special-education environment. In this kind of setting, a group of students with recognized impairments have individual education plans tailored to their particular requirements and skills. The two teachers shared similar responses as they explained how they need resources to help their students understand SEL. Kevin stated that he need more resources that will help "break down complex skills into smaller, manageable steps and scaffold instruction as needed to support understanding." Kevin also adds that he needs resources that will, "differentiate SEL instruction to meet the needs and abilities of students in the special education classroom." Brandon discusses the need for SEL resources that will assist with "individual student's background, personal needs, and their individual strengths and weaknesses." According to him, since every classroom and child is unique, teachers will be better able to adopt SEL if they have materials that promote children's uniqueness.

Three participants discussed what they would like resources to look like for them. For example, two teachers expressed their desire to have programs that model exactly how to implement an effective SEL lesson. Chanelle stated that having a PowerPoint that teachers can access when needed would help. Another teacher stated that having the counseling department provide them with resources is beneficial, but it was not a consistent support. Thomas explains, "When our counseling department has time, they will give us a weekly calendar of morning meeting questions and activities for the students, or they will come to speak to the students. It's very inconsistent because they are extremely busy with other tasks." Jasmine merely states that having access to resources is essential to implementing SEL successfully.

Building A Supportive Learning Environment

A subject that emerged from participant discussions of particular tactics for fostering and enhancing SEL is "Building A Supportive Learning Environment." Teachers discussed the various ways that SEL might improve students' overall performance. The methods they use to determine whether SEL implementation is beneficial or working for their students were also given. The participant responses were consistent with one another, resulting in subthemes that will be covered in the section that follows.

Modeling

According to five of the participants, one way to raise students' performance levels is to model or demonstrate to them how to use SEL skills. Jasmine shared that having a more structured SEL curriculum that is implemented in the daily schedule would be a strategy to increase SEL. Additionally, she stated, "Teachers and staff should model positive SEL skills with each other and the students." Kevin explained that "explicit instruction and modeling would create a nurturing and supportive learning environment that promote social, emotional, and academic development of all students." Showing the students how SEL works is a key technique to boosting their SEL performance, according to both Brittany and Brandon; however, Brandon also states that different approaches need to be adopted based on each student's needs. Stephanie shares her opinion by stating, "I think that having open discussions with the students and modeling SEL skills are beneficial in increasing students' social and emotional abilities and academic performance."

Observation

One method used by teachers to assess whether SEL is having a general impact on their kids is observation. Most of the participants shared that they simply watch their students to see if they are applying the skills and knowledge being taught through SEL lessons. Diamond reported that watching her students while task and problem solving on their own was her way of evaluating the impact of SEL. Similar to what Diamond shared, Torie said she observes her students' everyday arrival in the classroom and their work habits to gauge the impact of SEL on the students. In response Kevin states, "By using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data sources, self-report measures, behavioral observations, portfolio assessments, and program evaluation tools, educators can gather comprehensive evidence to evaluate the impact of Social and Emotional Learning on students' academic performance and social and emotional skills." One method that Alecia, Michelle, Jasmine, and Rachel utilized to determine the impact of SEL was student observation, i.e., by noticing if students apply SEL skills from what they have learned. Chanelle shared that she does not recognize any evidence on the impact of social and emotional learning as it relates to student's academic performance, but by observance, "I do realize if a student is upset, it will negatively impact their overall day, including academics and their abilities to regulate their self to be successful in the classroom."

Surveys

According to the participants, surveys are utilized as an attempt to evaluate the impact of SEL on students' overall performance. Stephanie discusses how this approach is done at the beginning of the school year to help with preparation. She states, "In the beginning of the school year, students take a survey with 20 questions to help teachers understand what students need." She continues to report that, "The program we use takes the answers and gives us our lessons for the year." Additionally, she shares that at the end of the school year, "students would take

another survey to see if the program helped them." Like Stephanie, Brittany also explained that surveys are done at her school throughout the year. Stephanie states, "Surveys are done school-wide, three times during the school year. Students rate themselves and teachers and counselors use that information to guide instruction and lessons on SEL."

Also, three other participants shared that surveys are used to monitor and track SEL learning and the impact it has on the students. According to Jasmine and Michelle, they both use a combination of techniques with surveys being one of them. Jasmine reports, "Evidence to evaluate the impact of SEL is a combination of pre and post assessments, behavior observation, surveys, and academic performance while Michelle simply states, "A combination of observations and SEL surveys that students complete are used to evaluate the impact of social and emotional learning." Overall student achievement, progress charts, and surveys are some specific ways used to evaluate the impact of SEL as it connects to students' overall performance, according to Brandon.

Research Question Responses

In this section brief answers to the research questions are provided. The experiences of the participants were used to discuss their opinions and views regarding the application of SEL. Using the data gathered, the themes that were previously covered are used to provide narrative responses to each of the study questions. Evidence from the participants themselves is cited to support the responses.

Central Research Question

The main question that guided this research study was: How do teachers perceive the implementation of social and emotional learning, and what impact does this implementation have on students? While the participants' definitions of SEL differed, all of their responses focused on

the idea that SEL is a technique to assist students with managing their emotions. Kevin defined

SEL as "the process through which individuals acquire and effectively apply the knowledge,

attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions." Thomas shared, "When

defining social and emotional learning, I think of it as a time for students to learn coping

strategies to help regulate their emotions." Rachel's definition of SEL stated, "Allowing students

to learn and grow with their emotions in a safe environment and teaching them how to verbally

articulate their feelings and emotions."

In addition to providing their definition of SEL, the participants shared their feelings and

experiences on implementing SEL. Responses provided from the participants created three

themes: the importance of social and emotional learning, challenges, and barriers, and building a

supportive learning environment. Subthemes surfaced from the three major themes which

include, life skills, student outcomes, healthy relationships, time, training, resources, modeling,

observation, and surveys. According to the results, teachers think that SEL is a crucial

component that needs to be used in the educational environment. Jasmine states, "I believe SEL

should be required in classrooms because it helps students develop essentialized skills such as

self-awareness, empathy, and responsible decision-making, which are critical for their overall

well-being and success in school and beyond." While all the participants feel and believe that

SEL is an important component, they also share other factors that might be preventing the

successful implementation of SEL.

Sub-Question One

What are teachers' perceptions of the implementation and value of social and emotional

learning? Eleven out of twelve participants believe that SEL should be required to implement in

the classroom. They all offered different justifications for why SEL should be mandated, but they

all agreed on one point, it is essential. Alecia stated, "Yes, I do believe that SEL should be required because students come with so many varying backgrounds and it allows the teacher to create norms for his/her own classroom and relationships." Like Alecia, Stephanie shares that, "social and emotional learning should be required to implement in the classroom because it increases self-awareness, academic achievement and builds relationships. Chanelle associated SEL importance with mental stating, "mental health has been identified as a real need to maintain an overall healthy lifestyle. Students deal with emotions every day and it is important for students to understand how to interpret their feeling in a way that is appropriate and safe." Rachel, the participant who feels that SEL should not be mandatory, simply feels that way because she reports that she does not have enough time and that the teacher has the responsibility.

Every participant reported positive feelings knowing that SEL must be implemented at their school as it is mandated by district leaders. For example, Thomas stated, "It makes me feel good to know that we are supposed to bond with our students and not allow it to be straight teaching and learning but allows us to implement life skills too." Additionally, all participants discussed that there are benefits to implementing SEL. Most of the benefits reported were lifelong skills, student growth, building relationships, and regulating feelings and emotions. Stephanie states, "Yes, there is a huge benefit in implementing social and emotional learning as it builds relationships with your students, you are teaching them social and emotional skills that can help them throughout their life." Brittany shares that SEL is beneficial because, "Students are more aware of their feelings and are empathetic to the feelings and needs of others." Rachel, Michelle, and Brandon share very similar feelings as they explain that SEL is beneficial in the classroom if it is implemented correctly.

Sub-Question Two

What are teachers experiences with implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom? Participants reported different experiences while implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom. Most of the experiences were centered around facing difficulties trying to implement a SEL successfully. Many teachers shared that they just did not have enough time to implement SEL effectively. Rachel stated, "I rarely have the time to complete lessons properly." Diamond also reported that, "there is not enough time to teach SEL" and Chanelle said, "The challenges I have faced as a teacher implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom is time."

Teachers expressed their confidence levels when applying SEL in the classroom. Participants stated that either they were not confident, or they were confident but needed more support and training for improvement. Kevin explained, "I think my confidence in applying SEL can be enhanced through more knowledge, trainings, practice, and ongoing support." Alecia was not sure about her confidence as she stated that she was somewhat confident and that "more training would provide more strategies for me to use with a diverse group of students." Stephanie and Torie shared that they are confident because they have been provided the proper training and useful tools from administration that supports them with implementing SEL successfully.

Sub-Question Three

In what ways do teachers believe, through their experience, social and emotional learning implementation improves students' SEL skills and academics? Through their experiences, participants described various strategies they thought helped children develop their SEL skills and succeed academically. One of the major strategies discussed involved showing students how to properly apply SEL skills. Jasmine said, "teachers and staff should model positive SEL skills

with each other." Brittany shared that if you show students how and why SEL is important, it will increase their SEL skills and academics. Building relationships was a consistent topic amongst the participants also. They shared how it helps the students be more involved. Alecia stated, "I think team building and fostering positive relationships are key to SEL and student achievement." Michelle also shared that, "building healthy relationships through consistency" will help with both academics and social progress.

The efficacy of SEL implementation has been continuously assessed by teachers using feedback from students. Teachers shared one approach that is used often is simply observing their students. Most of them explained that observation begins once the students enter the classroom. For example, one participant shared that the evidence used to determine the impact of SEL is "their willingness and positivity when entering the classroom daily." Another participant reported, "I use the evidence of my students being on task, problem solving without me, and changing their behavior quickly. Additionally, surveys were used to get student input, which helped the teachers better understand the needs of the students and guide the curriculum.

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Summary

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Chapter Four highlights descriptive information that summarizes the findings of this research study. Twelve participants completed a questionnaire related to the research questions, from which the data was collected. After reviewing and analyzing the data, three main themes emerged, the importance of SEL, challenges and barriers, and building a supportive learning environment. Subthemes including life skills, student outcomes, healthy relationships, time, training, resources, modeling, observation, and surveys were derived from the three primary themes.

Three sub-questions and the research study's core topic were addressed by the major themes that emerged. According to the results, the majority of participants think that SEL implementation is an essential element of education and that it is beneficial and impactful on the students, when it is implemented properly. Even though the participants strongly support SEL being implemented in the classroom, they also acknowledge difficulties doing so. Attending trainings, having more time, and having resources accessible, in the opinion of the participants, would aid in SEL effectiveness. Additionally, participants provided different strategies and ways to evaluate if the implementation of SEL is impacting the student's academic performance and social and emotional skills.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to discover teachers' lived experiences implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom setting and to determine its impact on students. The study included elementary school teachers who worked with students in grades K–5. This chapter will cover the research results based on the information gathered from the participants' questionnaire responses. Additionally, this chapter will address an interpretation of the findings, implications for policy and practice, implications for theory and methodology, limitations and delimitations, and will end with recommendations for future research.

Discussion

In this section, the findings will be presented in greater detail as they relate to the empirical and theoretical literature. The newly discovered information as well as the literature examined in Chapter Two will also be discussed. Findings on how the new-found data supports earlier findings on the research topic and/or how it differs will be included.

Summary of Findings

Twelve elementary school teachers who teach children in kindergarten through fifth grade answered a series of questions related to the study's three research questions. After review and analysis of the teacher response data, three main themes emerged as a result of recurring patterns. The three themes aligned with the central research question and sub-questions are seen in the figure below.

Figure 1

Themes that correspond with research questions

Research Question	Theme
RQ:1 What are teachers' perceptions of the implementation and value of social and emotional learning?	1. The Importance of SEL
RQ:2 What are teachers experiences with implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom?	2. Challenges and Barriers
RQ:3 In what ways do teachers believe, through their experience, social and emotional learning improves students' SEL skills and academics?	3. Building A Supportive Learning Environment

Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of the implementation and value of social and emotional learning?

Excluding questions about demographics, participants were asked a total of 13 questions related to the research questions. Of the 13 questions, the first five were designed to understand the teachers' thoughts and feelings regarding the application of SEL in the classroom. The five questions were, (1) How do you define Social and Emotional Learning? (2) Do you think Social and Emotional Learning should be required to implement in the classroom? Why or why not? (3) Do you think that implementing Social and Emotional Learning should be the responsibility of you, the teacher? Why or why not? (4) How does it make you feel to know that Social and Emotional Learning must be implemented? (5) Is there any benefit, in your opinion, to implementing Social and Emotional Learning? By posing these particular questions, the

researcher was able to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives on SEL and their feelings toward the program's implementation.

Participants definition of SEL varied; however, in their response they all discussed that it was a program that helps students manage their feelings and emotions. All participants expressed the need for and importance of having SEL integrated into the daily curriculum. They felt happy and excited, knowing that it is a requirement from their district to implement the program in the classroom. Most participants reported that it is their responsibility to implement the program while some shared that it is a team effort to include administrators and counselors. Teachers provided justification for their views on the significance and advantages of SEL implementation. Subthemes were developed due to the participants' persistent patterns. The subthemes were life skills, student outcomes, and healthy relationships.

Research Question 2: What are teacher experiences implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom?

To learn more about teachers' experiences implementing social and emotional learning, six questions related to the research question were posed. (1) What challenges, if any, have you faced as a teacher when implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom? (2) What specific strategies, if any, have you found most effective when implementing social and emotional learning to your students? (3) What benefits for yourself as a teacher, if any, have you experienced while implementing social and emotional learning, in terms of classroom management, student behavior, and student-teacher relationships? (4) Have you been confident in your ability to apply social and emotional learning? Why or why not? (5) How, if at all, have you been supported in implementing social and emotional learning through appropriate training

and resources? (6) What considerations do you feel are necessary to effectively implement social and emotional learning?

While participants feel the need for SEL implementation in the classroom, they also report having many obstacles trying to implement a successful program. Most of the participants did not feel confident implementing SEL due to lack of knowledge. The participants that did report feeling confident, shared that their school district prepared them on how to implement SEL effectively. Overall, the results showed that teachers believe they are not given enough time to properly implement SEL. They also report the availability of resources and the requirement for training in order to ensure the successful implementation of SEL. Subthemes were thus formed by recurring patterns including time, training, and resources.

Research Question 3: In what ways do teachers believe, through their experience, social and emotional learning implementation improves students' SEL skills and academics?

Two research questions reflecting participants' opinions on whether SEL enhances students' academic performance and SEL abilities were posed to the participants. (1) What specific strategies do you believe are beneficial in increasing students' social and emotional abilities and academic achievement through social and emotional learning implementation? (2) What evidence do you use to evaluate the impact of social and emotional learning on students' academic performance? From the posed questions, participants discussed different strategies that have been helpful for them in the classroom when implementing SEL. Few participants shared how SEL improves students academic achievement. However, most participants reported that having the students reflect was a strategy that is beneficial. Subthemes that resulted from the questions' most consistent answers were modeling, observation, and surveys.

Implications

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The research findings have both theoretical and empirical implications that were

discovered. The theory that guided this study was the CASEL framework as shown in the figure

below. This framework is the foundation for SEL as it assists with fostering knowledge and skills

to enhance students' learning and development (CASEL, 2023). Both implications are explained

in greater detail below.

Figure 2

CASEL Framework Wheel
https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/

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Empirical Implications

The application of SEL and teachers' perspectives were examined in Chapter Two

through an analysis of empirical literature. As previously mentioned, there were three major

themes that emerged from the data's collection common trends. The themes include the

importance of SEL, challenges and barriers, and building a supportive learning environment. In

addition, these emerging themes contributed further evidence to the existing body of scholarly literature.

All participants shed light on the importance and value of SEL being implemented in the classroom from their responses. Gimbert et al. (2023) assert that social and emotional learning (SEL) is an essential component that needs to be given considerable attention throughout the entirety of a child's educational journey. Participants discussed their thoughts regarding the impact that social and emotional learning skills have on students over the long run. Research has demonstrated that the implementation of SEL programs has long-term outcomes on students that extend beyond the limits of the classroom (Kim et al., 2022). Although participants feel that implementing SEL is an essential factor to education, they discussed the difficulties they face while trying to implement a successful program. Teachers highlighted the need for more time, training, and available resources to be more confident in implementing SEL properly. Research suggest that it is imperative to consider certain factors before planning to implement SEL such as, scheduling time for it to fit into instruction, allocating funds for resources, and preparing teachers to correctly deliver the program (Kaspar & Massey, 2022).

Furthermore, participants discussed specific strategies that they believe helps students apply SEL as it related to improving their SEL skills and academic achievement. They mentioned that planning and executing a successful program will be aided by demonstrating to the students how to apply SEL skills correctly and by getting input from them. According to research, providing students with feedback and modeling the right use of SEL skills are effective ways to help students' SEL in relation to their overall performance (Dowling & Barry, 2020). Another study clarified that giving students assessments aided in determining whether or not SEL was positively impacting them (Grant et al., 2023).

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical framework developed by CASEL was the chosen framework that aided this research because it offered a structure for emphasizing SEL and evidence of the potential effects of SEL practices on student outcomes. Regarding SEL, the CASEL framework offers an outlook on the information and abilities that students should expect to acquire throughout the course of the program. The utilization of the CASEL framework in education has led to significant recognition of its contextual relevance. Participants' understandings and perceptions of social emotional learning were further bolstered by this notion.

All participants reported that SEL should be required to implement in the classroom setting; however, their definitions of SEL varied. Research states that although CASEL is a framework creating mentally healthy and effective students, policymakers and school leaders do not really know how to improve teachers' SEL knowledge and behavior skills (Gimbert et al., 2021). It is important that teachers know and understand what SEL is before they can effectively implement it in the classroom. Many participants shared that SEL is required to be implemented during morning meetings at their school. Morning meetings are a selected school-wide classroom management approach that helps students with their social and emotional learning development. According to research, the frameworks used by CASEL are useful because they let teachers pick the tool that works best for their students (Lawson et al., 2018).

Implications for Policy or Practice

The data revealed teachers' feelings on implementing SEL in the classroom through their experiences. Teachers provided their opinions and beliefs on SEL as they've applied the program to their students. This study may yield useful information that may be applied to enhance the way SEL is implemented and how well students achieve SEL outcomes. The section below will outline strategies in which school districts can implement policies that will better enhance the implementation and effectiveness of SEL.

Implications for Policy

Participants said they would feel more confident applying social and emotional learning if they had received training. Prior to the start of school, teachers in each school district that mandates the implementation of social and emotional learning should send teachers to a training. One participant mentioned that, although attending a one-day training on social and emotional learning was somewhat helpful, he did not think he had learned enough in one day to carry out the program successfully. This outcome suggested that training should be conducted at the policy level over the course of at least two or three days to guarantee that teachers comprehend social and emotional learning (SEL) and are confident in their ability to implement it with their students. Another proposal that might be made at the policy level is to establish a strong foundation for the implementation of social and emotional learning. This could include a particular program that should be utilized within the school district and time embedded in the curriculum for proper and effective implementation.

Implications for Practice

In light of the findings of the study, there are a number of aspects that need to be taken into consideration with regard to the implementation of social and emotional learning.

Collaboration among teachers should take place to share best practices and effective strategies for implementing SEL in the classroom setting. Another thing to consider is the implementation of evaluations not only for the students but also for the teachers in order to measure the impact of the SEL program that is being utilized in the district and determine whether or not it is effective. Additionally, incorporating parental involvement would promote consistency between the home and school, as well as reinforce SEL skills that are acquired in the classroom.

Delimitations and Limitations

The following is a summary of the limitations and delimitations of the study. The researcher made conscious decisions to narrow the scope of the study, which is referred to as delimitations. An outline is also provided for the limitations of the study, which are potential flaws in the research that cannot be controlled.

Limitations

While qualitative research has benefits and advantages, there are also apparent limitations. Though the participants in the study are from different elementary schools, their beliefs will stem from the specific population and setting they work in, and the resources provided, which may not align with other teachers' points of view on SEL. Additionally, some of the participants will be those who are close to the researcher due to the study relying on convenience sampling for data collection, which results in the possibility of being biased. Face-to-face interviews allow the researcher to examine the process by which the participants respond to the questions being asked. However, the research only utilized an online questionnaire for the purpose of data collection. There is a possibility that the teachers will also provide biased responses to the online questionnaire because of their relationship with the researcher.

Delimitations

      The study is delimited as it only involved elementary teachers who taught grades K-5. To participate in the study, the participants had to be 21 years old with a teaching license or provisional certification. Convenient sampling was purposely used to recruit participants for the study. Not all school districts have made SEL a requirement to be implemented in the classroom setting; therefore, having participants who worked in a district that mandated SEL was suitable.

Recommendations for Future Research

      This study focuses on the perspectives of teachers regarding the implementation of SEL through their experience applying it in the classroom setting. Potential avenues for future research on this topic might include examining larger sample sizes, additional grade levels, and alternative methods of data gathering. Keeping these suggestions in mind, it is possible that the findings will be different because it has a more comprehensive perspective. Future research may also want to investigate the relationship between teacher training in SEL and their effectiveness in implementing SEL practices in the classroom. Additionally, cross-cultural studies can be carried out for the purpose of future study to gain an understanding of the ways in which cultural influences influence the perceptions and implementation of social and emotional learning practices by teachers. Furthermore, the impact that the culture and climate of the school have on the successful implementation of social and emotional learning programs should be investigated.

Summary

      Studies have shown that while social and emotional learning is beneficial, there is still a need for additional study on how teachers perceive the approach that is included into the curriculum and how it affects the social and emotional outcomes of their students (Corcoran et al., 2018; Sandilos et al., 2022; Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021). The purpose of this

phenomenological qualitative study was to discover teachers' lived experiences implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom setting and its impact on students. The study was guided by the CASEL framework which serves as a basis for the acquisition of SEL skills. Twelve elementary school teachers who were teaching students in grades k-5 participated in the investigation of this phenomena. There were three primary themes that emerged from the data analysis. The themes included the importance of SEL, challenges and barriers, and building a supportive learning environment. Teachers believe that SEL should be mandated in the classroom because they consider it to be an essential component of education. It came as a surprise to learn that only three out of the twelve participants had received training or had participated in professional development to acquire information and comprehend the appropriate way to integrate SEL. It was particularly interesting that all the participants, with the exception of two, shared that they had not detected any impact that SEL was having on students' academic accomplishments. It is recommended that further research be carried out to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

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Appendix A

IRB Application

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 20, 2024

Shaniqua Person
Jennifer Roberts

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY23-24-1283 TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND THE IMPACT IT HAS ON STUDENTS

Dear Shaniqua Person, Jennifer Roberts,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application per the Office for Human
Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be
exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data-safeguarding methods
described in your IRB application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human
participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude,
achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or
auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects
can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB
review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

For a PDF of your exemption letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard.
Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under
Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your information
sheet and final versions of your study documents, **which you must use to conduct your study,** can also be found on
the same page under the Attachments tab.

This exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be
reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes
by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to
your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B

Consent Form

Title of the Project: Teachers Perceptions on Implementing Social and Emotional Learning and The Impact It Has on Students

Principal Investigator: Shaniqua Person, Student/Doctoral Candidate, Community Care and Counseling Department, Liberty University

Invitation to Be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 21 years of age or older, a current elementary school teacher with a minimum of two years teaching, currently hold a provisional or teaching licensure, and must be implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) in your classroom. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore teachers' lived experiences implementing Social and Emotional Learning in the classroom setting. The study seeks teachers' beliefs and attitudes about Social and Emotional Learning and the impact it has on students.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in an online questionnaire that includes demographic questions and open-ended questions that will take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

2. Potentially participate in a follow-up, audio-recorded interview via zoom, if requested, that will take no longer than 30 minutes to complete.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, the data can be utilized for future research and recommendations for schools to consider when implementing best practices for Social and Emotional Learning in the classroom.

Benefits to society include increase knowledge on the topic.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. The risks involved in this study include providing personal perceptions based on lived experiences. To reduce risk, participants can decline to participate in the study at any time during the process.

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and faculty sponsor will have access to the records.

· Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.

· If participants are asked to do a follow-up, audio-recorded interview via zoom, it will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

· Data collected from you may be used in a professional presentation and/or for future research studies. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.

· Data will be stored on an encrypted USB flash drive that will be used on a password-locked computer. The USB flash drive will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet that only the researcher and faculty sponsor have access to. After three years, the researcher will delete all data obtained.

· If selected to participate in a follow-up, audio-recorded interview, the recordings will be stored on an encrypted USB flash drive used on a password-locked computer. The USB flash drive will be kept in a secure, locked cabinet that only the researcher and faculty sponsor have access to. After three years, the researcher will delete all data obtained.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study during the questionnaire, please exit the questionnaire and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

If you choose to withdraw from the study during or after completing the potential follow-up interview, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Shaniqua Person. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at (xxx) xxx-xxxx during the hours of 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM and/or email xxxxxxxx@liberty.edu. In addition, you may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Jennifer Roberts, at xxxxxxxxxx@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the IRB. Our physical address is:

Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is xxx-xxx-xxxx, and our email address is xxx@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☒ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Dear Potential Participant,

As a doctoral candidate in the Community Care and Counseling Department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to explore teachers' lived experiences implementing Social and Emotional Learning in the classroom setting. The study seeks teachers' beliefs and attitudes about Social and Emotional Learning, and I am writing to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 21 years of age or older, hold a teaching provisional or full licensure, and be a current elementary school teacher with a minimum of two years teaching. Additionally, participants must be currently implementing Social and Emotional Learning in the classroom setting. Participants will be asked to complete an online questionnaire using a provided link that will record all responses. The online questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Selected participants may be requested to complete an audio-recorded follow up interview via zoom that will take no longer than 30 minutes. Participants have 3-4 weeks for total participation including the online questionnaire and follow-up interview. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

To participate please click here ██ to read the consent form, agree to participate, and then continue to the questionnaire. If you are a selected participant that has been requested to complete an audio-recorded follow-up interview via zoom, I will contact you to schedule a time that works best for you.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the questionnaire. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please provide an electronic signature consisting of your name and click the arrow button at the bottom to proceed to the questionnaire. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the study.

Sincerely,

Shaniqua Person
Doctoral Candidate
(xxx) xxx-xxxx

Appendix D

Online Questionnaire

1. Your name _____

2. Please select your gender.

   o Male
   o Female
   o Non-binary/third gender
   o Prefer not to say

3. Please select your age range.

   o 21-25
   o 26-30
   o 31-35
   o 36-40
   o 41-45
   o 46-50
   o 50+

4. What is your race/ethnicity?

   o American Indian or Alaska Native
   o Asian
   o Black or African American
   o Hispanic or Latino
   o White
   o Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   o Two or more races

5. What state do you work in? Please spell out the state.

6. What type of district do you work in?

   o Urban
   o Suburban
   a. Rural

7. How many years have you been teaching?

   o 2-5 years
   o 6-10 years
   o 10+ years

8. What grade do you teach?

   o Kindergarten

- o 1st Grade
- o 2nd Grade
- o 3rd Grade
- o 4th Grade
- o 5th Grade

9. What environment do you teach in?

- o Self-contained classroom
- o Inclusion classroom
- o General-Ed classroom

10. How many years of experience do you have implementing Social and Emotional

Learning?

- o 1-3 years
- o 4-7 years
- o 8-10 years
- a. 11 or more years

11. How do you define Social and Emotional Learning?

12. Do you think Social and Emotional Learning should be required to implement in the

classroom? Why or why not?

13. Do you think that implementing Social and Emotional Learning should be the

responsibility of you, the teacher? Why or why not?

14. How does it make you feel to know that Social and Emotional Learning must be

implemented?

15. Is there any benefit, in your opinion, to implementing Social and Emotional Learning?

16. What challenges, if any, have you faced as a teacher when implementing Social and

Emotional Learning in the classroom?

17. What specific strategies, if any, have you found most effective when implementing Social
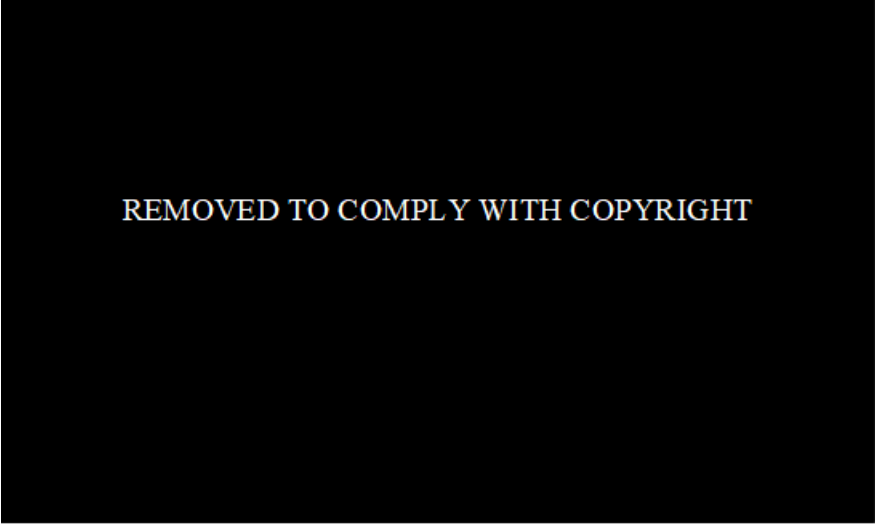
and Emotional Learning to your students?

18. What benefits for yourself as a teacher, if any, have you experienced while implementing Social and Emotional Learning, in terms of classroom management, student behavior, and student-teacher relationships?

19. Have you been confident in your ability to apply Social and Emotional Learning? Why or why not?

20. How, if at all, have you been supported in implementing Social and Emotional Learning through appropriate trainings and resources?

21. What considerations do you feel are necessary to effectively implement Social and Emotional Learning?

22. What specific strategies do you believe are beneficial in increasing students' social and emotional abilities and academic achievement through Social and Emotional Learning implementation?

23. What evidence do you use to evaluate the impact of Social and Emotional Learning on students' academic performance and social and emotional skills?

Potential Follow-Up Interview

1. Preferred email:

2. Preferred telephone number:

3. Best way to contact you:

4. Best time to contact you:

Appendix E

Theoretical Framework Wheel

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