



SEL for Educators

"teachers with more developed emotion skills tend to report less burnout and greater job satisfaction"

Source: <https://www.ycei.org/>

The Success of Social-Emotional Learning Hinges on Teachers

By Madeline Will — April 07, 2020

"only 29 percent of teachers said they have received ongoing training in social-emotional learning that has continued throughout the school year, a new EdWeek Research Center survey found. A fifth of teachers say they never receive opportunities in their job to reflect upon and improve their own social-emotional skills."

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-success-of-social-emotional-learning-hinges-on-teachers/2020/04>

How SEL Helps You as a Teacher

By Shivohn N. García, PhD

Why Self-Management Is Important to Your Teaching

As adults, we're constantly drawing on our self-management skills throughout the day—both meeting the demands of a high-stress job and managing life outside of school. Given this, it's not surprising that we all struggle from time to time.

Using these same skills can be hard for students too, especially when you think about the barriers they face in and out of the classroom. For example, some students' self-management skills can be challenged by a curriculum that isn't flexible for their learning and thinking differences. That can make it difficult for students to manage the overwhelming stress of "not getting it." The same curriculum may also not be historically and culturally diverse enough for them to see themselves represented in it. You might see students who appear to lack motivation or interest. It's important to explicitly acknowledge that you see these challenges. Using culturally responsive teaching and drawing on diverse content can also improve students' sense of safety and belonging.

The barriers that students face can affect not only their readiness to learn, but also your own self-management. It's normal to feel challenged or stressed when you try to expand your classroom practice. It feels new and requires attention when time is short. Consider it as an opportunity to build your self-management skills.

Why Social Awareness Is Important for Your Teaching

To maintain and build healthy relationships with students, we need to be aware of and respect other perspectives, values, cultures, and differences. Equity and empathy are both at the heart of this work. It's not always easy to see another perspective, especially if you're trying to address a student's behavior or a disagreement with a colleague in a difficult moment. But you can still acknowledge differences and be compassionately curious about the other person.

One of the greatest ways to approach social awareness with your students is to get to know them and their families and their hopes and aspirations. It helps you decide how to approach lessons, present content, react to student behavior, and more. It also allows you to create opportunities for students to bring their whole selves into your classroom—one of the best ways to show your respect for differing perspectives and life experiences.

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/empathy/how-sel-helps-you-as-a-teacher>

About the Author

Shivohn N. García, PhD is an experienced educator and the senior director of the Impact team at Understood.

Reviewed by

Gabrielle Rappolt-Schlichtmann, EdD is the executive director and chief scientist at EdTogether and an adjunct lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Educators' social and emotional skills vital to learning

Stephanie M. Jones, Suzanne M. Bouffard, and Richard Weissbourd

Teachers with stronger SEL competencies have more positive relationships with students, manage their classrooms more effectively, and implement SEL programs targeted to students with greater fidelity.

Students learn from the way teachers manage frustration, maintain control of themselves and the classroom, stay focused in the face of distractions, and shift tactics when needed.

Social and emotional competencies influence everything from teacher-student relationships to classroom management to effective instruction to teacher burnout.

http://www.nationalresilienceresource.com/Education/Educators_social_and_emotional_skills.pdf

Social and Emotional Learning and Teachers

Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl

How can we boost teachers' social-emotional competence, and how can we help them create the kind of classroom environment that promotes students' SEL? Teachers are certainly at risk for poor social-emotional wellbeing. Research shows that teaching is one of the most stressful occupations; moreover, stress in the classroom is contagious—simply put, stressed-out teachers tend to have stressed-out students. In the past few years, several interventions have specifically sought to improve teachers' social-emotional competence and stress management in school, and Schonert-Reichl reviews the results, many of which are promising.

She also shows how teachers' beliefs—about their own teaching efficacy, or about whether they receive adequate support, for example—influence the fidelity with which they implement SEL programs in the classroom. When fidelity is low, SEL programs are less successful. Finally, she examines the extent to which US teacher education programs prepare teacher candidates to promote their own and their students' social-emotional competence, and she argues that we can and should do much more.

Teachers are the engine that drives SEL programs and practices in schools and classrooms. Yet until recently, their role in promoting SEL and their own social and emotional competence and wellbeing have received scant attention.

Teachers' SEL

Teachers' social-emotional competence and wellbeing strongly influence the learning context and the infusion of SEL into classrooms and schools. 5 Teachers' own competencies shape the nature of their relationships with students; according to researchers Patricia Jennings of the University of Virginia and Mark Greenberg of Pennsylvania State University, "the quality of teacher-student relationships, student and classroom management, and effective social and emotional learning program implementation all mediate classroom and student outcomes."⁶ Classrooms with warm teacher-child relationships promote deep learning among students: children who feel comfortable with their teachers and peers are more willing to grapple with challenging material and persist at difficult learning tasks.⁷ Conversely, when teachers poorly manage the social and emotional demands of teaching, students demonstrate lower performance and on-task behavior.⁸ Clearly, we need to optimize teachers' classroom performance and their ability to promote SEL in their students by helping them build their own social-emotional competence.⁹ I discuss this topic in more depth below.

Do Teachers Buy In to SEL?

Any discussion of teachers and SEL should begin by asking whether they accept the notion that education should explicitly promote students' SEL. Simply put, do teachers agree that SEL should be a part of education? Recent research indicates that the answer is a resounding yes. Indeed, teachers are strong advocates for students' SEL. A nationally representative survey of more than 600 teachers found that large majorities of preschool to high school teachers believe that SEL skills are teachable, that promoting SEL will benefit students from both rich and poor backgrounds, and that SEL has many positive effects—on school attendance and graduation, standardized test scores and overall academic performance, college preparation, workforce readiness, and citizenship. However, the teachers also said that to effectively implement and promote SEL skills in classrooms and schools, they need strong support from district and school leaders.¹⁰

Teachers' Stressful Lives

If teachers support SEL, what might prevent them from implementing SEL strategies and programs in their classrooms? Decades' worth of research shows that teaching is one of the most stressful professions in the human service industry.¹¹ Work-related stress encompasses the detrimental physical and emotional responses that arise from a mismatch between a

job's requirements and a worker's capabilities, resources, or needs.¹² In the context of education, teachers can experience stress when they appraise a situation as threatening but have limited ability to change or improve it. Take the case of teacher autonomy: among people in professional occupations, teachers rank lowest in believing that they have a say in what happens in the workplace.¹³ The percentage of teachers who report low job autonomy increased from 18 percent in 2004 to 26 percent in 2012.¹⁴

The proportion of teachers who report significant levels of on-the-job stress is also rising. In a recent Gallup Poll on occupational stress, 46 percent of teachers reported high daily stress—on par with nurses and just above doctors (45 percent). Teachers and nurses had the highest levels of reported stress among all occupational groups.¹⁵

Why does teacher stress matter for our understanding of SEL? High levels of chronic stress can lead to occupational burnout—characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a low sense of accomplishment in one's work.¹⁶ What's more, teacher stress has been linked to decreased job satisfaction, poor instructional practices, and poor student outcomes.¹⁷

High stress levels also harm teachers' physical health and wellbeing. For example, when people are highly stressed, the quantity and quality of their sleep is severely compromised. A study of high school teachers found that 46 percent suffered excessive daytime sleepiness and 51 percent had poor sleep quality.¹⁸ Sleep disturbances, in turn, produce a cascade of negative effects, including increased risk for infectious disease and depression, and susceptibility to illnesses such as heart disease and cancer.¹⁹

Chronic work stress and exhaustion among teachers is also associated with negative changes in biological indicators of stress. Recent research has found that teachers who report chronic stress demonstrate atypical patterns of physiological stress reactivity, as assessed via daytime levels of the stress hormone cortisol.²⁰

Stress Contagion in the Classroom

How does teacher stress affect students' SEL? Research shows that stress is contagious—when teachers are stressed, students suffer collateral damage. A recent study of more than 10,000 first-grade students and their teachers examined the relationship between classroom environments and the students' mental

health. The researchers found that teachers who reported higher levels of stress had more students in their classrooms with mental health problems.²¹ Specifically, when teachers lacked key ingredients for teaching—ranging from basic resources such as paper and pencils and heat to child-friendly furnishings and computers—students exhibited higher levels of externalizing problems (arguing, fighting, impulsive behavior, and the like), interpersonal problems (for example, trouble expressing emotions and resolving conflicts), and internalizing problems (such as anxiety, sadness, and low self-esteem). Students also suffered when teachers weren't supported by their colleagues.

My own recent research corroborates the idea that classroom stress is contagious. My colleague Eva Oberle and I examined the link between teacher burnout and student stress in a sample of Canadian fourth- and seventh-graders.²² The teachers completed a survey called the Maslach Burnout Inventory, modified for teachers.²³ To measure students' stress, we collected their salivary cortisol. After adjusting for differences in cortisol levels due to age, gender, and time of awakening, we found that higher levels of self-reported burnout in classroom teachers could significantly predict higher morning cortisol levels in students. Although our findings were correlational, our study was the first to show that teachers' occupational stress is linked to students' physiological stress regulation. But we don't yet know the direction of the stress contagion. That is, does teacher burnout boost stress levels in students? Or do students who enter the classroom with higher levels of stress lead to increased teacher burnout?

www.futureofchildren.org

Kimberly A. Schonert-Reichl is an applied developmental psychologist and a professor who leads the Social and Emotional Learning Lab in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia (UBC). She is also the director of the Human Early Learning Partnership in UBC's School of Population and Public Health in the Faculty of Medicine.

Joshua Brown of Fordham University reviewed and critiqued a draft of this article

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1145076.pdf>