

# Social Emotional Learning: The Wind Beneath Their Wings

A Special Collaboration between Sucheta Kamath,  
MA & Debra Krodman-Collins, Ph.D.

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# ALL Learning is Social and Emotional!

# WEBINAR COLLABORATION



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# Question 1 for Debra:

Why do you see social-  
emotional learning as  
fundamental?





- Research shows that children are social-emotional beings well before they enter academic instruction (Ref Adele Diamond, Ph.D.)
- Students with social-emotional challenges or stressors have difficulty engaging in and/or optimizing academic learning



To the degree that their students feel

- insecure
- disconnected, and
- agitated

teachers must divert energy to establishing this foundation before they can proceed with effective instruction.



# Question 1 for Sucheta:

What is the relationship  
between SEL and Executive  
Function?



A survey of 762 educators from 15 countries by *The Economist Intelligence Unit* found 80% of educators believe positive emotions are critical for academic success, emotional well-being, and is crucial for developing foundational literacies and communication skills

Survey conducted by the Economist Intelligent Unit and Reported by CASEL





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# Wide-Range of Benefits

## In the classroom:



93% believe they have a **social learning** focus in class



82% believe students benefit from **challenges they can overcome**



75% believe a feeling of **community and belonging** impacts academic success

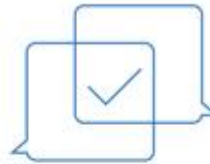
**Social**

**Cognitive**

**Emotional**

## Outside the classroom:

79% think **positive, stable relationships** are important to academic success



82% think **extracurricular activities** have a positive effect on well-being



83% think a **supportive home environment** impacts emotional well-being



Source: *Economist (Intelligence Unit)*

EMOTION AND COGNITION IN THE AGE OF AI A well-being agenda for 21st century skills

**Impulse Control**

**Working Memory**

**Cognitive &  
Affective Flexibility  
or Theory of Mind**





- **Working Memory** - To effectively process and keep track of the influx of affective information
- **Inhibition** - To delay personal gratification, temper emotions, and instead work collaboratively in a social context to help achieve their goals
- **Cognitive and emotional flexibility** - to develop new strategies to get through personal hardships, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and handle everyday hiccups





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**UMBRELLA SKILLS:** umbrella skills refer broadly to this area of development and may be used to refer to many diverse skills (simple and complex, emotion and cognitive, plus others not listed here)  
Examples include: Self-Regulation, Self-Control

**COMPLEX SKILLS:** complex skills integrate multiple simpler skills, from cognitive and/or emotion domains, and may involve additional knowledge and skills (such as the ability to recognize feelings)

Examples in **Cognitive** Domain:  
Planning, Problem Solving, Goal Setting

Examples in **Emotion** Domain:  
Persistence, Grit, Emotion Regulation

Executive  
Function

Effortful  
Control

**MULTI-COMPONENT SKILLS:**  
EF and EC are similar but distinct constructs; both are comprised of multiple sub-components (simple skills below)

Working  
Memory

Attention Shifting  
(Flexibility)

Attention Control  
(Focus)

Inhibition

Wait / Delay

**SIMPLE SKILLS:** simple skills are foundational processes (or sub-components) that comprise EF, EC and more complex self-regulatory behavior; skills

You cannot improve  
Social-Emotional  
competence without  
addressing the  
underlying  
Executive Function  
skills







## Question 2 for Debra:

Can you give some examples of how a social-emotional learning perspective affects the interpretation of, and interventions for, problems referred to you?



## Schooling Challenges with Social-Emotional Roots

- A student is referred for learning or behavioral difficulties
- What is the source of the difficulty?

- If the student is socially and emotionally competent, one concludes that the child is being purposefully difficult, oppositional, lazy, apathetic
- The student could do better but does not care to
- This competence is too often assumed
- The intervention focuses on motivating the student to carry out academic responsibilities





If the student lacks social-emotional competence, demonstrating this **revises** expectations and interventions

- Accommodations to compensate for the student's SEL deficits
- Interventions to build the student's SEL competencies





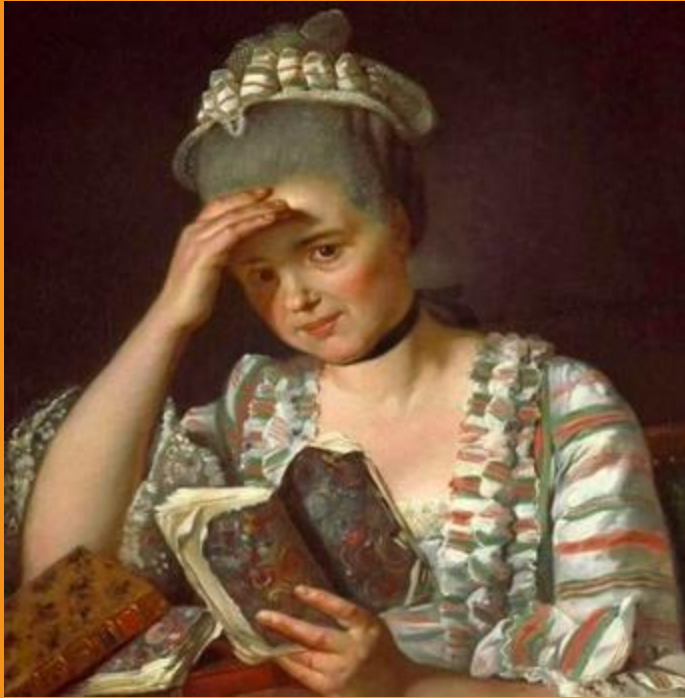
## Question 2 for Sucheta:

What's the role of stress in emotional dysregulation, and what are some of the strategies to help students manage their emotional responses?

## Deep Dive into the Stress Response (S-R):

- Stress once helpful, now a handicap
- Fight or Flight are two workhorses of S-R
  - Adrenaline
  - Glucocorticoid
- During crisis, all else is suspended
- Ideally, post crisis, S-R must be turned off
- Modern stress is psychological and never stops (worry, anxiety, fear, sadness)





## The Right Amount of Stress:

Activates us to move, act, engage,  
focus and get things done

## The Unending Amount of Stress:

Activates sense of panic, feeling  
paralyzed, ineffective, and overall  
failure to launch



If a child can't **read**, we teach him to **read**.

If a child can't do **math problems**, we teach him how to do **math problems**.

If a child doesn't know how to **behave**, we **punish** him.





1. Help students with Goal-Setting
2. Experience Reframing
3. Self-Soothing Tools for Choice-Making
4. Teach effective Self-Assessment
5. Self-Advocacy
6. Compassion-Based Leadership



## Goal-Setting practices as a motivational tool:

- Goals focus attention
- Goals help mobilize resources
- Goals facilitate persistence
- Goals facilitate accomplishment



Sternberg & Williams (2002), p.361, discussing the work of Locke & Latham, 1990)

Giving kids the opportunity to express their social-emotional experiences with a new framework:

- Rainbow Days
- Cloudy Days
- Rainy Days
- Stormy Days



# Example: Experience Reframing (1)



**Rainbow Days**



**Cloudy Days**



**Rainy Days**



**Stormy Days**



Teddy Bear Days



Kitty Cat Days



Sloth Days



Porcupine Days

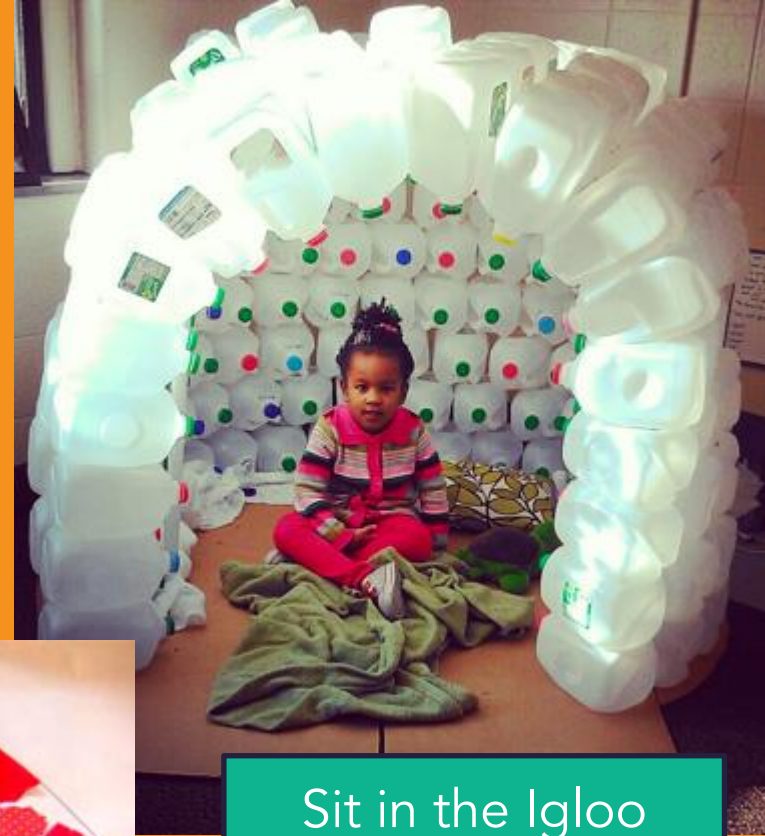


# SEL Strategy #3: Tools for Choice-Making





Hug Mr. Bear



Sit in the Igloo



Make a Rainbow

## Levels of Expertise:

- I am a **Jogger**
- I am a **Skateboarder**
- I am a **Driver**
- I am a **Pilot**





In Math, I am a  
***Skateboarder***

I can do this...

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I cannot do this...

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## Levels of Expertise:

- I am a **Novice**
- I am an **Apprentice**
- I am a **Practitioner**
- I am an **Expert**





## Shades of Self-Advocacy:

- Paraphrasing the expectations
- Asking for clarification
- Speaking on behalf of yourself
- Standing up for yourself
- Looking out for yourself

# "How have you helped today?"

**Did you offer help?**

**Did you ask for help?**

**Did you accept help?**

**Did you politely decline help so  
you could try it yourself?**





## Kindness Ambassador Leadership Training:

- Getting to know kids from various groups
- Allowing others to go first
- Offering voluntary help
- Looking out for lonely or misunderstood kids

Resource: The Helping Curriculum





## Question 3 for Debra:

Can you describe some methods and programs that promote social-emotional learning, and the challenges to implementing them in schools?

Children mirror their teachers' energy and behaviors. So first, teachers, take care of your own social-emotional self.

- Teaching is quite stressful
- Develop strong self-calming skills
  - Brave over Perfect & The Sweet Spot
  - Mindful Leader







#1. Calming Breathing is the most portable self-calming skill to develop

- A teacher and class can practice many times a day
- Examples: HUH breaths, Lazy-8 breaths, Counted Breaths
- Breath control is a physical skill, accessible to students who would have difficulty understanding more verbal-abstract instruction.

#2. Positive Practice is useful in teaching social skills.

- Examples: TWO be Kind; Positives for All



- Social Thinking
- Incredible 5-Point Scale
- Mindful Powers
- Yoga and Kindness Programs
  - Kindness Curriculum
  - Calm and Alert
  - PATHS
  - Zones of Regulation
  - Inner Explorer
  - Yoga 4 Classrooms
- Calming Kids
- CASEL
- Safe and Civil Schools
- Coping with Stress
- Tools of the Mind
- Kindness Matters 365
- Mindful Practices
- Revelations in Education



Range from resources for materials and lessons individual teachers can access and use to programs designed to be implemented schoolwide

- Students with autism spectrum disorders or other conditions that impair communication, cognitive flexibility, social interaction, executive function and self-regulation
  - Everyday events trigger fight/flight/freeze reactions.
  - Challenging for them to attain a state of relaxation
- Structure and Visual Cues (ref. TEACCH<sup>®</sup> Autism Program)
  - Evidence-based approaches to decrease behavior problems, decrease restricted/repetitive behaviors, and improve sensory-emotional regulation  
(National Autism Center's National Standards Report- 2009)



- Financial
- An addition, or the foundation?
  - Teacher involvement
  - Schoolwide involvement
  - Community involvement
- WHAT IS TESTED, MATTERS – is anyone watching and collecting data?





## Question 3 for Sucheta:

How do we promote student success by focusing on the teacher's social-emotional competence?



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## Teacher Treatment of Low Achievers:

- Get less wait time
- Are criticized more often for failure
- Are praised less frequently
- Receive less feedback
- Are called on less often
- Are seated further away from the teacher
- Have less eye contact from the teacher
- Have fewer friendly interactions with teacher
- Their ideas are accepted less often



Reference: Good, T.L. (1987)

1. Put your WHY at the forefront of teaching
2. Control your emotions
3. Know every child's story
4. Build trust
5. Be generous with your love
6. Invoke and strengthen a sense of community





- What's your personal story?
- "Why I became a teacher."





- Center yourself
- Breathe and delay responding
- Take a break
- Create a workspace mental spa
- Recruit help from your students



Explore the origin story with your kids:

- Meanings behind names
- What's your middle name? And do you have a nickname?
- Why do you like your name?



## 2 x 10 Relationship Guideline

- 2 minutes a day
- 10 days in a row
- Talk to the students about anything **EXCEPT** school work

Reference: Ginsberg, Margery B.; Wlodkowski, Raymond J.(2004). "Creating highly motivating classrooms."



Cultivate a practice telling your kids that they are beautiful – just the way they are!







**IN SUMMARY...**



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**All learning is social  
and emotional**





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**Anchor children through  
personal relationships**





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# SEL is Teachable and Learnable





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**Your temperament  
is the key**





Infinite know how  
for school



**Thriving communities  
have passionate  
leaders**



# Thank You!



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