EDUCATING THE HEART AS WELL AS THE MIND Social and Emotional Learning for School and Life Success

KIMBERLY A. SCHONERT-REICHL AND SHELLEY HYMEL

A COMPREHENSIVE MISSION FOR SCHOOLS IS TO EDUCATE STUDENTS TO BE KNOWLEDGEABLE, RESPONSIBLE, SOCIALLY SKILLED, HEALTHY, CARING, AND CONTRIBUTING CITIZENS. — Greenberg et al. (2003)[1]

EDUCATING THE MIND WITHOUT EDUCATING THE HEART HAS PRODUCED BRILLIANT SCIENTISTS WHO USED THEIR INTELLIGENCE FOR EVIL.
— Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu

READ ALMOST ANY SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT AND you will encounter a sentiment similar to that posited here by Greenberg and his colleagues – asserting the importance of nurturing academic skills alongside social skills. But one needs only to read the latest ranking of schools to see that the emphasis in schools today is primarily on academic knowledge. Groundbreaking new research, however, is telling us that if we want our children to succeed in both school and life, we need to promote their social and emotional skills.[2] The need to extend our focus in schools beyond educating just the minds of our children to educating their hearts as well is eloquently emphasized in the second quote by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu. When Bishop Tutu made this statement in 2004 at the University of British Columbia, in a dialogue with luminaries such as Nobel Peace Prize Laureates the Dalai Lama and Shirin Abadi, he was referring to the doctors who committed heinous experiments in Nazi concentration camps. But his point can be extended to the everyday lives of our children, who are frequently confronted with moral dilemmas in which both their hearts and minds must work together to solve a problem. We are all in danger – as world events continue to teach – when children grow up with academic knowledge but lack essential social and emotional skills such as compassion and empathy. And so, we argue here that a combination of academic learning and social and emotional skills is the true standard for effective education for the world we now live in.

Social emotional learning (SEL) offers educators, families, and communities relevant strategies and practices to

better prepare students for "the tests of life, not a life of tests".[3] A myopic focus on academic achievement not only undermines our children's potential to become responsible, caring, and contributing citizens, it also threatens their psychological well-being and the Canadian economy. Take bullying, for example. In a recent study of 7,235 Canadian youth, aged 10 to 16, funded by Health Canada's Division of Childhood and Adolescence, 33% of boys and 30% of girls reported being victimized in the previous few months.[4] The victimization took several forms, including physical assault, ethnic discrimination, rumour victimization, sexual harassment, and verbal assault. Findings revealed that more girls than boys reported being teased (79% versus 67%) and having rumours spread about them (72% versus 63%), whereas more boys reported physical victimization (45% versus 21%). Being a victim was not without consequence – indeed, victimization was associated with increased mental health problems among the children and youth in the study. The detrimental effects of bullying do not end with the victims, however. A recent study of almost 400 students in grades 8 to 10 reported that nearly 87% of the students had witnessed either their friends or other students being bullied at least a few times during the school year and that witnessing bullying was associated with higher levels of depression.[5]

Bullying is only one example. The mental health problems of our nation's youth are reaching staggering rates. Epidemiological reports suggest that approximately 20% of children and adolescents in Canada experience mental health problems severe enough to warrant mental health services,[6] placing a growing strain on our mental health care system. By 2020, mental illness is expected to be the country's leading health care cost.

Attention to social and emotional issues in school has also become a practical concern in education, as teachers struggle to teach children in a changing and complex society where these skills cannot be taken for granted.

The case for SEL in schools becomes even clearer when one considers that the very nature of school-based learning is relational. Social and emotional skills create responsive, caring, and inclusive classrooms and provide the foundation for building and sustaining learning relationships that lead to academic success and responsible citizenship. Because many of our students' interpersonal interactions occur there, schools provide adults with a unique and natural setting in which they can intervene to foster the development of social and emotional skills.

WHAT IS SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)?
What do we want for our children's future? What skills and competencies do we want them to have to succeed in life? When parents and teachers are asked to consider these questions via national opinion polls or surveys, their first responses often include social and emotional skills rather than traditional academic skills. Educators and parents alike repeatedly assert their hope that children will be happy, have caring and supportive interpersonal relationships, demonstrate empathy and care for others, make responsible decisions, and desist from risky and health-compromising behaviours. In essence, parents and educators identify those skills on the social emotional side of learning rather than those on the academic side.

EN BREF La recherche démontre que nous ne pouvons pas – et ne devrions pas – séparer les sentiments de l'enseignement ou de l'apprentissage et que le rôle de l'apprentissage social et émotionnel à l'école est important. D'abord, les écoles sont des lieux sociaux et l'apprentissage, un processus social. Les élèves n'apprennent pas seuls, mais en collaboration avec leurs enseignants, en compagnie de leurs pairs, avec le soutien de leur famille. Ensuite, les émotions peuvent faciliter ou entraver l'apprentissage des élèves et leur succès scolaire, de sorte qu'il importe que les écoles en tiennent compte dans le processus pédagogique, au profit de tous les élèves. Enfin, les résultats de recherche sont très clairs : les habiletés sociales et émotionnelles aident non seulement les élèves à acquérir les compétences nécessaires pour réussir à l'école, elles les aident aussi à devenir des citoyens plus empathiques, responsables et concernés.

SEL IS SOMETIMES CALLED "THE MISSING PIECE," BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS A PART OF EDUCATION THAT IS INEXTRICABLY LINKED TO SCHOOL SUCCESS, BUT HAS NOT BEEN EXPLICITLY STATED OR GIVEN MUCH ATTENTION UNTIL RECENTLY.

Social emotional learning, or SEL, is the process of acquiring the competencies to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively.[7] In short, SEL competencies comprise the foundational skills for positive health practices, engaged citizenship, and school success. SEL is sometimes called "the missing piece," because it represents a part of education that is inextricably linked to school success, but has not been explicitly stated or given much attention until recently. The good news is that these skills can be taught through nurturing and caring learning environments and experiences. Moreover, SEL emphasizes active learning approaches in which skills can be generalized across curriculum areas and contexts when opportunities are provided to practice the skills that foster positive attitudes, behaviours, and thinking processes.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; www.casel.org) at the University of Illinois at Chicago, is at the forefront in North American and international efforts to promote SEL. Founded in 1993 by Daniel Goleman (famed author of the 1995 landmark book, *Emotional Intelligence*) and Eileen Rockefeller Growald, its mission is to advance the science of SEL and expand evidence-based, integrated SEL practices as an essential part of preschool through high school education. CASEL has identified a set of social emotional skills that underlie effective and successful performance for social roles and life tasks, drawing from extensive research in a wide range of areas, including brain functioning and methods of learning and instruction.[8] The SEL competencies identified by CASEL are presented in Table 1.

A GROWING MOVEMENT
Recognition of the importance of SEL in schools has spread rapidly throughout the world in the last few years. Singapore has undertaken an active initiative, as have some schools in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea. In Europe, the U.K. has led the way, but more than a dozen other countries have schools that embed social emotional learning approaches within the school curriculum, includ-

Table 1: CASEL's Five SEL Competency Areas

SEL Dimension	Skills
Self-Awareness	Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations; sense of self-confidence.
Social Awareness	Showing understanding and empathy for others. Ability to take others' perspectives; appreciating and interacting with diverse groups.
Self-Management	Managing emotions and behaviours to achieve one's goals. Being able to regulate one's own emotions; conscientiousness; perseverance.
Relationship Skills	Forming and maintaining positive relationships, working in teams, negotiating conflict; seeking help when needed.
Responsible Decision-Making	Assessing risks and making good decisions; respecting others; taking personal responsibility for one's decisions.

Table 2: Categories of BC's Social Responsibility Standards

Social Responsibility Dimension	Example Behaviours
Contributing to the classroom and school community	• sharing responsibility for their social and physical environment • participating and contributing to the class and to small groups
Solving problems in peaceful ways	• managing conflict appropriately, including presenting views and arguments respectfully, and considering others' views • using effective problem-solving steps and strategies
Valuing diversity and defending human rights	• treating others fairly and respectfully; showing a sense of ethics • recognizing and defending human rights
Exercising democratic rights and responsibilities	• knowing and acting on rights and responsibilities (local, national, global) • articulating and working toward a preferred future for the community, nation, and planet • possessing a sense of idealism

ing Australia, New Zealand, and some countries in Latin America and Africa. UNESCO, in 2003, initiated a worldwide plan to promote SEL by preparing a report delineating ten basic principles for implementing SEL based on the latest empirical research in the area.[9] The UNESCO report was sent to the ministries of education in 140 countries (available at www.casel.org).

All across the world, SEL has become the organizing umbrella that encompasses many different education movements emphasizing similar concepts and skills, such as programs in character education, violence prevention, anti-bullying, drug prevention, and school discipline. SEL provides a framework within which several seemingly disparate programs and initiatives can coherently work together.

In Canada a number of SEL initiatives have emerged in the last several years. For example, in British Columbia in 2000, the Ministry of Education identified social responsibility as one of four "foundational skills", as important as reading, writing, and numeracy. The framework for BC's Social Responsibility Performance Standards includes a common set of expectations for the development of students along four categories (see Table 2, and www.bced. gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/social_resp.htm for the full report).

The Vancouver School Board and almost every elementary and secondary school in Vancouver have identified the promotion of social responsibility as a primary goal. As stated in the Board's Accountability Contract: "The goal recognizes that contributing in the classroom and school community in the areas of volunteering, leading, participating, and cooperating is as important as academic, intellectual, physical, artistic and aesthetic achievement. Social responsibility addresses the overarching goal of developing thoughtful, responsible and active citizens."[10]

The Ontario government is taking the lead from British Columbia in identifying the social and emotional side of learning as integral to education. In October, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced a $2 million initiative to support character education in schools, to inspire students to become caring, contributing, and compassionate citizens. The goals of the Character Education (CE) movement are in sync with those of SEL, aiming to help students develop socially, ethically, and academically through modeling and teaching practices that infuse character development into all aspects of the school culture and curriculum. By encompassing the underlying skills necessary to enact good character, SEL is inextricably linked to CE .

In this vein, the Roots of Empathy (ROE) program – a primary preventive social emotional program designed to promote children's emotional and social understanding developed in Canada by Mary Gordon – has been identified by Berkowitz and Bier in their 2005 review of what works in character education.[11] ROE, a theoretically derived school-based universal preventive intervention, focuses on facilitating the development of children's emotional and social understanding. Its cornerstone monthly school visits by an infant and his/her parent(s) serve as a springboard for lessons that teach infant development, emotion knowledge, and perspective taking. In the 2006-2007 school year, the ROE program is being implemented in over 2,000 kindergarten to grade 8 classrooms across Canada, reaching more than 50,000 children. The program has been

piloted in Japan and is currently being piloted in Australia and New Zealand. Findings from the ROE research have shown that students who receive the program, when compared to students who do not, experience significant improvements in emotional knowledge and prosocial behaviour and reduction in forms of aggression associated with bullying.[12]

CHANGES IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN GRADE 8 COULD BE BETTER PREDICTED FROM KNOWING CHILDREN'S GRADE 3 SOCIAL COMPETENCE THAN FROM THEIR GRADE 3 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

THE LINK BETWEEN SEL AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In their recent book *Building Academic Success on Social Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say*, Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg make the case for SEL in schools by delineating recent research showing how it leads to 1) improved student attitudes, including motivation and increased sense of belonging to school, 2) positive behavioral changes, including reductions in bullying behaviors and risky health behaviours, and 3) improvements in academic achievement as assessed via a variety to measures, including standardized achievement test scores and grades.[13] Following is a summary of some noteworthy research findings that have emerged in the last several years, all supporting the role of SEL in promoting academic success.

- An examination of students' social and emotional competence and academic achievement from Grade 3 to Grade 8 revealed that changes in academic achievement in Grade 8 could be *better predicted from knowing children's Grade 3 social competence* than from their Grade 3 academic achievement.[14]
- Kathleen Wentzel, in a 1993 research report, found that children's prosocial behaviours, such as helping, sharing, and cooperating exhibited by students in the classroom *were better predictors of academic achievement* than were their standardized test scores.[15]
- A 1984 study showed that school interventions that increase social and emotional competence *result in higher achievement levels*, although the reverse is not true (i.e., academic enrichment does not increase social responsibility).[16]
- A quantitative analysis of more than 300 research studies on SEL revealed that students enrolled in an SEL program ranked at least *10 percentile points higher* on achievement tests than students who did not participate. Moreover, students in SEL programs:
  - had significantly better attendance records;
  - displayed more constructive and less disruptive classroom behavior;
  - liked school more;
  - had better grade point averages, and
  - were less likely to be suspended or otherwise disciplined.[17]

Creating a caring and safe educational environment is the foundation for both SEL and academic achievement, and teachers hold the key. Indeed, teacher warmth and support has unparalleled power to help children achieve and thrive, as illustrated in a 2005 study of 910 children in the first grade, some of whom had been identified as at risk at the beginning of the school year on the basis of demographic characteristics. Findings revealed that by the end of the school year, children in classrooms in which teachers infused "everyday interactions" with emotional support had achievement scores and student–teacher relationships commensurate with their low-risk peers. In contrast, at-risk students placed in less supportive classrooms had lower achievement and more conflict with teachers.[18]

CONCLUSION

The research shows that we cannot – and should not – separate how we feel (about ourselves, our relationships, our environments) from teaching or learning. It makes the case for SEL in schools clear. First, schools are social places and learning is a social process. Students do not learn alone but rather in collaboration with their teachers, in the company of their peers, and with the support of their families. Second, emotions can facilitate or hamper students' learning and their ultimate success in school. Because social and emotional factors play such an important role, schools must attend to this aspect of the educational process for the benefit of all students. Finally, the research evidence is astoundingly clear – fostering students' social emotional skills not only helps them to develop the skills necessary for success in schools, such skills assist them to become more caring, responsible, and concerned citizens. ▌

KIMBERLY A. SCHONERT-REICHL is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. She began her professional career as a middle school teacher and then as a high school teacher at an alternate school for "at risk" adolescents. Kim is currently involved in several school-based research projects examining the effectiveness of programs designed to promote students' social and emotional development, including a longitudinal evaluation of the "Roots of Empathy," and an investigation of the effects of a program aimed at fostering children's "mindfulness" in school.

SHELLEY HYMEL is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. She has studied human social development for over 30 years, with a focus on social-emotional learning in educational settings. She works regularly with schools on issues of bullying, and has directed summer camps and classroom programs to facilitate social growth and is currently one of four directors of the Canadian Initiative for the Prevention of Bullying, and part of the executive team for PREVNet, a national effort to "promote relationships and eliminate violence" among Canadian youth.

A list of print and online resources related to this article is available on the CEA website at www.cea-ace.ca

Notes

1. M.T. Greenberg, R.P. Weissberg, M. Utne O'Brien, J.E., Zins, J. E., L. Fredericks, H. Resnik, H. et al. "Enhancing School-based Prevention and Youth Development Through Coordinated Social, Emotional, and Academic-Learning, *American Psychologist 58* (2003): 466.

2. K.A. Schonert-Reichl and S. Hymel, "Promoting Social Development and Acceptance in the Elementary Classroom," in *Teaching Students with Diverse Needs: Elementary Classrooms*, ed. J. Andrews (Scarborough, ON: Nelson,1996), 152-200; M.J. Elias, J.E. Zins, P.A. Graczyk, and R.P. Weissberg, "Implementation, Sustainability, and Scaling-up of Social-Emotional and Academic Innovations in Public Schools, *School Psychology Review 32* (2003): 303-319; J.E. Zins, M.R. Bloodworth, R.P. Weissberg, and H.J. Walberg, "The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success," in *Building Academic Success Through Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say?* eds. J.E. Zins, R.P. Weissberg, M.C. Wang, and H.J. Walberg (NY: Teachers College Press, 2004), 3-22. (Available on-line on CASEL – www.casel.org)

3. M.J. Elias "Prepare Children for the Tests of Life, Not a Life of Tests," *Education Week* (2001).[on-line]. http: [on-line]. http://www.edweek.org/ ew/ew_printstory.cfm?slug=04elias.h21

4. W. Boyce, *Young People in Canada: Their Health and Well-being. Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children* (Health Canada, 2004).

5. R.A. Bonanno and S. Hymel, "Witnessing Bullying: Assessing Exposure and Negative Consequences" (Poster presented at the Annual Conference on Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence, Ottawa, Ontario, May 2006).

6. E. Romano, R.E. Tremblay, F. Vitaro, M. Zoccolillo and L. Pagani, "Prevalence of Psychiatric Diagnosis and the Role of Perceived Impairment: Findings From an Adolescent Community Sample," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 42* (2001): 451-461.

7. M.J. Elias, "The Connection Between Academic and Social-emotional Learning," in *The Educator's Guide to Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement*, eds. M. J. Elias and H. Arnold (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2006), 4-14.

8. D. Goleman *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam, 1995); Zins, Weissberg, Walberg, and Wang.

9. MJ. Elias, *Academic and Social-emotional Learning* (International Academy of Education, International Bureau of Education (UNESCO), 2003).

10. VSB Accountability Contract, 2002.

11. M. Berkowitz and M.C. Bier, *What Works in Character Education: A Research-Driven Guide for Educators* (Character Education Partnership, 2005). Available on-line at http://www.character.org/resources/ceppublications/

12. K.A. Schonert-Reichl, V. Smith, and A. Zaidman-Zait, *Effects of the "Roots of Empathy" Program on Children's Emotional and Social Competence*. Manuscript under review for publication.

13. Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg.

14. G.V. Caprara, C. Barbanelli, C. Pastorelli, A. Bandura, and P.G. Zimbardo, "Prosocial Foundations of Children's Academic Achievement," *Psychological Science 11* (2000): 302-306.

15. K.R. Wentzel, "Does Being Good Make the Grade? Social Behaviour and Academic Competence in Middle School, *Journal of Educational Psychology 85* (1993): 357-364.

16. J.D. Coie and G. Krebhiel, "Effects of Academic Tutoring on the Social Status of Low-achieving, Socially Rejected Children," *Child Development 55* (1984): 1465-1478.

17. R.P. Weissberg and J. Durlak, "Social and Emotional Learning for School and Life Success." Invited address for the Society for Community Research and Action (APA Division 27) Distinguished Contribution to Theory and Research Award at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC., August, 2005.

18. B.K. Hamre and R.C. Pianta, "Can Instructional and Emotional Support in the First Grade Classroom Make a Difference for Children at Risk of School Failure? *Child Development 76* (2005): 949-967.

WEB RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Centre for Academic and Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
http://www.casel.org

CASEL is the best place in North American to obtain educator friendly materials and readings for promoting the social and emotional development of their students. You can download several articles and resources. Particularly useful is the newly published "Safe and Sound Guide: An Educational Leaders Guide for Evidence-Based Practice." In this guide, the authors provide a comprehensive review and evaluation of 85 SEL programs designed to promote students' social and emotional learning. In the appendix for this guide, the authors provide descriptions of each program along with contact information for obtaining the program.

Development Studies Center (Child Development Project)
http://www.devstu.org/

This center is dedicated to children's intellectual, ethical and social development. This site is a great resource for teachers. It outlines the centers school-based program as well as after school programs. Parents should check it out too. The center's website gives parents some direction in terms of their involvement in their children's development. It's a very comprehensive site.

Studies in Moral Development and Education
http://www.uicedu/~lnucci/MoralEd/

This website provides a very in-depth look at moral development. There are links to the latest practices and activities in the area moral development. It highlights featured articles on issues of moral development and books of interest. You can also visit this site to see some of the classroom practices that are associated with moral development or join the mailing list. It's all here!

Roots of Empathy Primary Prevention Program
http://www.rootsofempathy.org/

What is Roots of Empathy™?
It's a rich, vital, and highly rewarding classroom parenting Roots of Empathy™ that teaches human development and nurtures the growth of empathy. A baby and parent(s) visit a classroom once a month for a 10-month period. A Roots of Empathy™ instructor works with students before, during, and after each visit. Students' learn about parenting, about themselves, about how others feel, and teachers almost always learn something new about their students. All the learnings springboard from visits with the baby.

This website provides detailed information about a classroom-based prevention program designed to foster empathy and prevent antisocial/aggressive in children in grades Kindergarten to grade 8.

Center for the Fourth and Fifth Rs:
Respect and Responsibility
http://www.cortland.edu/www/c4n5rs/

This center serves as a regional, state, and national resource in character education. A growing national movement, character education is essential to the task of building a moral society and developing schools which are civil and caring communities. The Center disseminates articles on character education, sponsors an annual summer institute in character education, publishes a Fourth and Fifth Rs newsletter, and is building a network of "Fourth and Fifth Rs Schools" committed to teaching respect, responsibility and other core ethical virtues as the basis of good Lots and lots of links to related websites.

Centre for Social and Emotional Education
http://www.csee.net/

(from the website)The Center for Social and Emotional Education's (CSEE) mission is to educate and support social and emotional education leaders and K-12 schools as they work to improve their climate for learning. CSEE synthesizes research and best practices from K-12 education, character education, social emotional learning, risk prevention and health/mental health promotion into practice guidelines, data driven tools, education and professional development.

The Search Institute
http://www.search-institute.org/

The Search Institute is an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to advance the well-being of adolescents and children by generating knowledge and promoting its application. Search Institute conducts research and evaluation, develops publications and practical tools, and provides training and technical assistance. The institute collaborates with others to promote long-term organizational, and cultural change that supports the healthy development of all children and adolescents.

RECENT BOOKS/GUIDES ON SEL

Cohen, J. (Ed.) (2001). *Caring classrooms/intelligent Schools: The social emotional education of young children (Social and Emotional Learning, 2)*. New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.

Cohen, J. (Ed.). *Educating minds and hearts: Social emotional learning and the passage into adolescence*. New York, NY: Teacher's College Press, Alexandria, VA: ASCD, co-publisher.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2003). *Safe and Sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) Programs*. Author. (Available on-line at www.casel.org)

Denham, Susanne A. (1998). *Emotional Development in Young Children*. New York, NY: TheGuilford Press.

Durlak, J. A. (1995). *School-based prevention programs for children and adolescents*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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Elias, M. J., & Arnold, H. (Eds.). (2006). *The educator's guide to emotional intelligence and academic achievement* . Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

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