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**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) AND THE INITIATION
TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM IN ISRAEL**

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Abstract

In recent years educators all over the world has begun to realize that the aim of the school in the 21st century had changed. The school's focus has changed from a school of academic content to a school that develops skills. In the past few years, it has become clearer that teachers and students must be equipped with social – emotional skills. The covid 19 pandemic reinforces the fact that the school environment puts the teacher in front of different challenges that evoke different emotions that affect the teacher's functioning, ability to adapt to change, ability to promote social and emotional abilities in his students. This article reviews the various emotional abilities whose existence is essential for the integration of the new teacher in the school, including emotional intelligence and emotional resilience. This article is based on doctoral studies that focus on the construction of a new training program for teachers in their first year of school. As part of the training program, emphasis will be placed on emotional social learning and its importance to the new teacher professional development, its ability to cope and adapt to changes relating to learning, teaching and school. The article seeks to present theoretical factors and models alongside studies examining the relationship between social emotional learning (SEL) and the emotional-social functioning and the ability of the new teacher to integrate them into his own teaching abilities.

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Keywords: New Teachers Training Program, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Self-perception, Self-ability, Teacher Training

1. Introduction

The article seeks to present theoretical factors and studies examining the importance of social emotional learning (SEL) and emotional-social functioning to the initiation teacher training program and how those abilities will develop in Israel. There for we will refer in this article to various self-perceptions of importance for the new teacher including self-perception and self-ability, as well as perceptions related to the teacher's ability to motivate himself and his students, and the emotions that arise in him during it. Due to the interdependent effects that exist between social emotional learning and the fact that in a school environment - the school puts the teacher in the face of various challenges that provoke positive and negative emotions it is very important to integrate social- emotional learning into the training process that takes place as early as the first year of the teacher at the school.

2. Problem Statement

In the past ten years the focus of the school has changed from a school of academic content to a school that develops skills. Over the past few years, it has become clearer that teachers and students must be equipped with social – emotional skills. The covid-19 pandemic reinforces the fact that teachers face numerous challenges at school, which evoke various emotions, all of which affect the teachers': functioning, adaptability, and ability to promote social and emotional abilities in their student. Therefore there it is importance to create a learning environment that integrate SEL into all aspects of the teacher professional development in the Israel Education System but up to date most of programs that are aiming to promote socio-emotional learning in the education system focus on different levels: at the student level, at the classroom and school level, and at the systemic level. But up to date the SEL skills have not been implemented in the teachers training program in Israel

3. Research Questions

The Covid 19 pandemic has increased the importance of developing SEL skills in teacher's professional development and especially in novice teachers training program. The lack of emphasis on SEL skill development in Israeli training programs for novice teachers has highlighted the importance of creating a new type of training program that focuses on these skills This article will examine what is The Role of Social-Emotional Competencies in New Teachers Training Program

4. Purpose of the Study

As part of the doctoral research, an intervention program will be implemented, which will examine whether novice teachers benefit from SEL skills during their first year of teaching, the purpose of the study is to examine the importance of SEL for novice teachers.

5. Research Methods

This is a theoretical paper, based on the up-to-date literature on social – emotional learning (SEL). The research will be done using a mixed method, In the research the participants will be approximately 150 new teachers who graduates from an Academic College of Teachers in Israel. The tolls applied willbe pre- and post-questionnaire, interview guide, semi-structured interview in a focus group. (This is part of the research will be detailed in a future article / study.

6. Findings

Social Emotional learning (SEL) has historical and theoretic roots that draw from a range of theories related to human development (Bear et al., 2015). SEL is known as a process that helps teachers develop skills needed to understand and manage emotions, and to develop the ability to show empathy forothers and make responsible decision, all of which are important for teachers in general and especially fornew teachers (Mahoney et al., 2018).

There are, according to Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020) several core competencies that must be considered. Those competencies can be summarized within the CASEL'S Competency wheel as seen in figure 1.

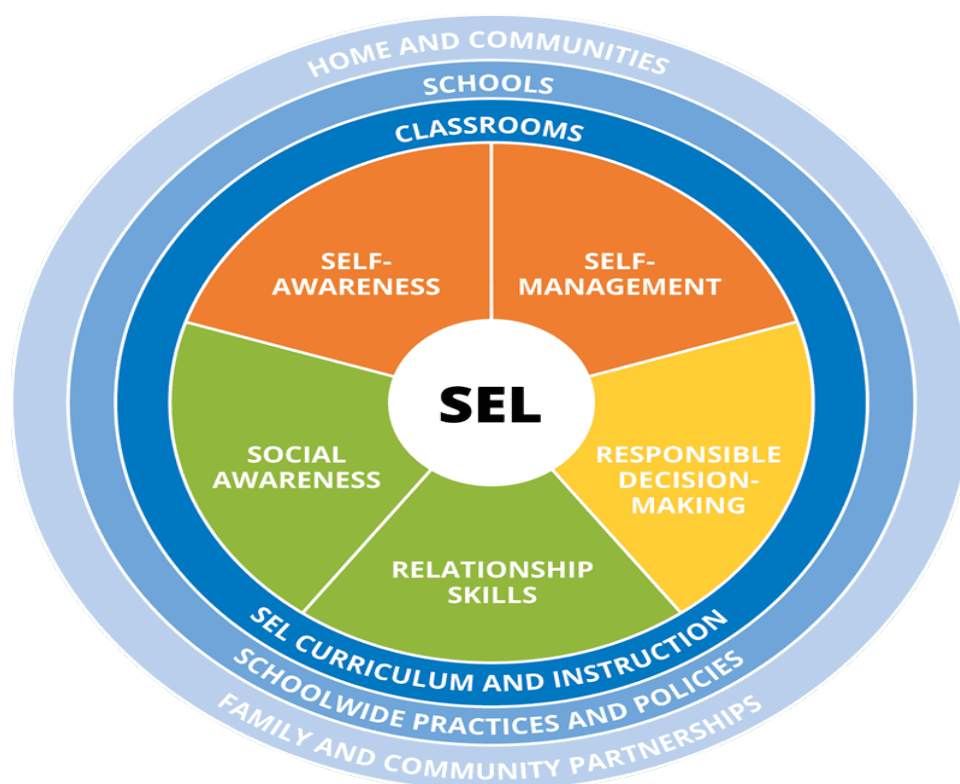


Figure 1. SEL Competency Wheel (CASEL, 2020)

These components should be developed by each teacher. These components include a wide range of capabilities and abilities that are important to teach, to promote and to develop from the first year of a teacher at the school. Those abilities are:

- **Self-Awareness:** The ability to be aware of your emotions and how are they effecting your work as a teacher.
- **Self- Management:** The abilities of the teacher to control and mange his emotion.
- **Social- Awareness:** The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts (CASEL, 2020).
- **Relationship Skills:** The abilities to develop to promote and establish social relationships with their students, students' parents and colleagues.
- **Responsible Decision - Making:** The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions across diverse situations. This. This includes the capacitiesto consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being (CASEL, 2020).

6.1. The Role of Social-Emotional Competencies in New Teachers Training Program

Teacher training is critical to any change or impetus in educational improvement. In recent years research shows that the teacher emotional skills and competence who represents the set of knowledge, abilities, and values can help them with his personal and professional development (Bunaiasu, 2018). The social and emotional and social program that include curriculum lessons targeting social – emotional competencies and do so within a context of supportive settings can be effective in achieving a wide range of abilities that are importance for the teachers and especially for the new teachers at school (Bear et al., 2015). The teachers affect the students in at least three ways (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). First, emotional, and social learning affects the quality of the relationships between teacher and student. Calm, positive, and satisfied teachers are expected to be better equipped to treat their students with sensitivity and warmth, even when students behave in challenging ways. When students have a high quality of relationships with their teachers, they have a higher learning capacity and better social suitability. Conversely, when students and teachers have negative relationships or confrontational relationships, students are less likely to be involved in the school and more likely to have low educational achievements. Second, the teachers demonstrate emotional and social learning for the students. Students learn from the way teachers manage frustration, maintain control of themselves and in the class, stay focused in the face of distractions and change tactics when necessary. Students also learn from the way teachers treat students who need better skills of emotional and social learning, such as: when students behave cruelly towards each other. Third, the emotional and social learning abilities of teachers are expected to influence the management and organization of their classroom (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017).

Those competences can be established through a teacher training program that will be most beneficial when it is implemented in a planned and systematic curriculum (Beltman et al., 2011) that will include SEL in three areas:

- Emotional processes that include precise tagging and understanding emotions; supervision of emotions and behaviour according to the situation; understanding the other side's point of view and displaying empathy (Bunăiașu, 2018).

- Inter-personal/social skills that include understanding social cues (such as: body language), proper reference to intent regarding the behaviour of others; creating positive interaction with other students and adults, and behaviour in social ways (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2012).
- Cognitive regulation that includes maintaining attention and focus and flexibility to changes when necessary (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). Those skills can increase the emotional and social abilities of the new teacher to be more resilience to changes like those that the recent COVID pandemic cause (Styfanyshyn & Yurko, 2020). The COVID 19 pandemic increased the demand for greater integration and implementation of SEL into the schools and classrooms and to create the program needed for systemic SEL implementations.

6.2. SEL and Initial Teacher Training in Israel

Novice teacher education takes place in colleges of education and in schools of education at universities. Since a new policy was introduced in 2003, teachers are required to complete an induction year (their first year of teaching) before they may obtain a teaching license (Ariav Committee Report, 2006). Teacher education in colleges combines disciplinary and pedagogical content, typically in a four-year program (110 to 115 hours annually, including the one-year induction), and results in a bachelor's degree in education and a certificate to teach at the primary or lower secondary level. The programs for teacher education at universities are specific to secondary school teachers. The prerequisites for obtaining an education license include a teaching certificate, an academic degree, and the successful completion of the induction year. Since 2006, the basic pedagogical component of teacher education programs has been extended to 24 to 30 hours annually and comprises educational studies, research methodology, and pedagogical studies, including a supervised practicum. Overall, the pedagogical component complements 60 hours per year of disciplinary studies. In 2009, an educational reform, NEW HORIZON (OFEK HADASH) (New Horizon, 2009) was initiated at the national level for primary and lower secondary schools, and four main goals were set forth: strengthening the status of teachers and raising their salaries; ensuring equal opportunity for every student, raising student achievement, and narrowing education gaps; improving school climate; and empowering principals and extending their authority in schools. The reform gives principals greater responsibility for teacher evaluation and performance and exemplifies a trend toward increasing the accountability of schools for quality of instruction and student outcomes. The reform establishes a scale of promotion for teachers and principals and constructs the process of teacher evaluation in a way that reflects the complexity of their work and creates a common language for all those involved with teacher evaluation in the different arenas of the school system (both within the Ministry of Education and outside, i.e., inspectors, principals, teachers, academics, etc.). The reform strongly reflects the “no child left behind” rationale and makes provisions for it to be implemented in schools—i.e., time is dedicated in teachers' daily schedules for helping students with learning difficulties as well as exceptional students (Mullis et al., 2016). According to the new reform, all primary and lower secondary school teachers are required to undergo 60 hours of in-service training per year, at least half of it in their professional domain. As most science teachers hold a teaching license in biology or chemistry, the physics component of the in-service trainings is enhanced. Every school offers 28 hours per month of institutional in-service training, planned by the principal and managerial staff, in two to five subject areas. Each teacher is required to complete training in two to three subject areas. In-service professional development programs are planned in each subject according to

recommendations made by policymakers and implemented by special professional development centers for in-service teachers, and by universities and colleges of education. There are four types of training within the professional development framework: group training intended to facilitate the implementation of policy; task-oriented training for principals, coordinators, and leaders (initiated by the Ministry of Education); school-based training for addressing the needs of individual schools; and personal training for professional enrichment and further education. But there is no SEL competence in any of the training program in Israel.

In recent years, there has been a growing adoption of the principles of CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning). In the process of social learning, emphasis is placed on identifying emotions and expressing optimal communication, cooperation, and decision-making in a responsible way. In Israel, the field of SEL is in the process of implementation and assimilation in schools. The pandemic and the social distance that teachers and students face has increased the need for the SEL skills to be implemented. The need to integrate it into the field also arose in a situation of online learning with ways to meet social and emotional needs both immediately and depending on the most context, both in a potential online routine, both in an online and individual framework, while adapting it to the diverse needs of the learners and the other school staff – teachers, management staff, parents and the community (Benvenisti & Friedman, 2020)

The Ministry of Education in Israel joins educational systems in many places around the world that have implemented and assimilated social learning as part of the curriculum. And building an environment in which mental well-being is made possible in these four aspects: a personal aspect - the student as an individual (intrapersonal, interpersonal, emotional, and cognitive); a systemic aspect of the educational framework; an aspect of teaching-learning processes; a family and community aspect". This was an important step through implements SEL in the Israel Education System but up to date most of programs that are aiming to promote socio-emotional learning in the education system focus on different levels: at the student level, at the classroom and school level, and at the systemic level. They may be all- school (preventive) programs, intervention programs designed for at-risk (therapeutic) student populations, and programs in certain areas of knowledge. Programs to promote social-emotional learning have been found to be effective for students at all levels (Kindergarten), for school staff and for the academic institution (Ran, 2019). Up to date the SEL skills have not been implement in the teachers training program in Israel.

6.3. The SEL as Part of the New Training Program

The developing the field of social-emotional learning began in the early 1990s, with the development and operation of the Life Skills Program (Schechter, 1991). The program was developed first in elementary education in cooperation with the Department of Curriculum, the Department of Primary Education, and the Religious Directorate, and was operated under the responsibility of the Psychological Counselling Service, first as an experimental program and later published in 1997 (Arnan et al., 1997). The life skills program was a turning point, in that it placed the preoccupation with emotional and social aspects at the core of formal education, at the core of the curriculum and not as a secondary response in informal education (Shadmi, 2004). Since then, the focus in Israel school was on the wellbeing of the students and less on the teachers or the new teachers' emotional skills. Lately, Shadmi (2019), the outgoing director of the Psychological Counselling Service at the Ministry of Education, said: "SEL represents the perception and vision of the ministry that sees social-emotional learning as an important pillar of educational activity". The

implantation of SEL into the training programs can be incorporated into routine school practices and do not require staff from outside the school for successful delivery (Oberle et al., 2016). An effective SEL interventions and skill development should occur in an environment that is safe and well-managed that can create and provides opportunities for practicing SEL skills (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Issues including communication styles, high performance expectations, classroom structures and rules, school organizational climate, commitment to the academic success of all students and teachers alike (Lawson et al., 2019). As part of the doctoral research an intervention program will be done that will examine the contribution of SEL skills to the novice teachers in their first year of teaching. Due to the pandemic and the online learning one of the main emphasise will be on social and emotional competence that teachers need to have to face the changing world using the CASEL high-quality SEL instruction that has four elements represented by the acronym (CASEL, 2020).

SAFE:

Sequenced - following a coordinated set of training approaches to foster the development of competencies.

Active - emphasizing active forms of learning to help students practice and master new skills.

Focused - implementing curriculum that intentionally emphasizes the development of SEL competencies. Explicit - defining and targeting specific skills, attitudes, and knowledge (CASEL, 2020).

7. Conclusion

The article shows that SEL skills can increase the emotional and social abilities of the new teacher, thereby making them more resilient to change, such as the change brought on by the recent COVID 19 pandemics (Styfanyshyn & Yurko, 2020). The COVID 19 pandemic increased the demand for greater integration and implementation of SEL into the schools and classrooms, and for creating programs needed for systemic SEL implementations, especially among teachers in their first year of teaching. The importance of SEL components to the teacher training program with an emphasis on the Israel initial teacher training. The value and impact of social and emotional learning to teachers had become more significant due to the recent pandemic. According to the CASEL report, the research result shows that there are skills that are the most in demand among society today: innovation, complex problem solving, critical thinking and analysis, active learning. Those components' must be part of the training program for the novice teachers in their first year of teaching, especially in the ever-changing world. Effective skill development through SEL interventions can predict children's success in school and in life, an effective SEL intervention program can be taught and assessed but to do that there is an explicit attention to context. This is foundational to the promotion of SEL in school and to the integrating SEL into teacher training program (Kimberl & Schonert-Reichl, 2019).

As part of the doctoral research, an intervention program will be implemented, which will examine whether novice teachers benefit from SEL skills during their first year of teaching.

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