Social Emotional Learning and Education: Can’t Have One Without the Other?

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“It is the pervading law of all things organic and inorganic,
Of all things physical and metaphysical,
Of all things human and all things super-human,
Of all true manifestations of the head,
Of the heart, of the soul,
That the life is recognizable in its expression,
That form ever follows function.
This is the law.”

Louis Sullivan (1896)
Form Follows Function

• Principle of modern architecture and industrial design
• The shape of a building or object should be based on its intended function or purpose
• How about Social Emotional Learning? Should form follow function?
Presentation Goals

• Review SEL literature to clarify disparate research findings
• Discuss ecological and social learning models of behavior change
• Promote integration of SEL and educational curriculum
SEL

• SEL is a process for helping children and adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness
• SEL teaches the skills to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work, effectively and ethically
• Sequenced, Active, Focused and Explicit
Skills & Competencies

CASAL has identified 80 programs that meet criteria for effectiveness focused on:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making
CASEL Meta-analysis

• Meta-analysis
  – Combines results of several studies to determine an overall effect size controlling for relevant contextual variables

• Effect size - measure of strength of relationship
  – ES = (Mean program A - Mean program B)/pooled standard deviation
  – < .30 = small, > .30 and < .60 = moderate, > .60 = strong

• Three reviews
  – Universal, Targeted, After-School
Reviews

- **Universal**
  - All students
  - 180 school-based studies, 277,977 students
- **Indicated**
  - At-risk but not in special education
  - 80 studies, 11,337 students
- **After-School**
  - Not academics or Outward Bound
  - 57 studies, 34,989 students
Universal Results

![Bar chart showing effect sizes for different student outcomes. The chart indicates that the effect sizes vary from small to moderate.](image)
Universal Results
Implementation Quality

![Bar chart showing effect size for different student outcomes: Skill, Att, SocB, Cond, Dist, Acad. The chart indicates effect sizes ranging from small to moderate. The y-axis represents effect size, and the x-axis represents student outcomes.]
Universal Results

![Bar chart showing effect sizes for different student outcomes: Skill, Att, SocB, Cond, Dist, Acad. The effect sizes are labeled as Small, Moderate, and Large. The chart compares different roles: Teacher, Researcher, and Multi.](chart.png)
Indicated Results

![Bar Chart]

- **Skill**: Effect Size
- **Att**: Effect Size
- **SocB**: Effect Size
- **Cond**: Effect Size
- **Dist**: Effect Size
- **Acad**: Effect Size

Effect Size Scale:
- **Small**
- **Moderate**
- **Follow-up**

Student Outcomes Bar Chart

- Post
- Follow-up
After-School Review

Moderate

Effect Size

Student Outcomes

Self-Per | SchBond | SocB | Cond | Grades | AchTest | Drug | Attend

0.40 | 0.35 | 0.30 | 0.25 | 0.20 | 0.15 | 0.10 | 0.05 | 0.00

Moderate
Conclusions

• SEL programs produce positive results for most children, and best results for children at-risk for behavioral and emotional problems

• However, program content and implementation quality highly varied, with small effect sizes for most outcomes

• Does not provide information on which programs work best for which students under which conditions
IES Social and Character Development (SACD) Study

• 7 research teams selected from 90 applications to evaluate one SACD universal program of their choosing
• 84 schools with random assignment to SACD program or control
• 3 year evaluation with both program-specific and study-wide evaluation
• 6,567 third graders at start and 6,249 fifth graders at end (95%)

U. S. Department of Education, National Center on Education Research
NCER 2011-2001
SACD Study Evaluation

- 20 outcomes in 4 domains
  - Social and emotional competence (3)
  - Behavior (9)
  - Academics (2)
  - Perceptions of school climate (6)
- Child report, primary caregiver, teacher
SACD Study
Research Questions

Average effect of 7 SACD programs on:
- SACD instruction in the schools
- Students’ social and emotional competence, behavior and academics, and perception of school climate

• Do average effects differ by:
  - Gender, family, community, child behavior

• Does implementation quality effect student outcomes
SACD Study Results

• On combined program analysis, two positive program effects (perceptions of school climate) of 60 tested

• On individual program analysis, nine positive effects, 7 negative program effects, of 420 tested

• Lack of positive results not due to subgroup differences (gender or SES), or differential program impacts
SACD Study
Conclusions

• No improvement on student outcomes when considered together, individually by program, or for specific subgroups
• Combined- and individual-program analysis found fewer significant impacts than expected by chance
• “In sum, the SACD combined-program evaluation provides no evidence that the seven universal, schoolwide programs improved students’ social and character development.”
Second Step
Program-Specific Evaluation

• Summaries of the data on program implementation imply that the program was exceptionally well implemented.
• No consistent pattern of positive effects was found across any outcome examined.
  – Occasional significant effects were not replicated for other cohorts or other years.
• The results provide little support for the use of this particular instructional program to prevent problem behavior or promote social competency

Gottredson et al., SREE Conference, 2008
ABC Program
Program-Specific Evaluation

- Sobering results -mostly nonsignificant- when effects are present, they are small to moderate in magnitude
- Much more difficult to implement school-wide behavior management programs in inner city schools than the literature suggests
- **No intervention schools continued to use the school-wide program; the district adopted other SACD and school-wide programs**

Pelham et al., SREE Conference, 2008
Office Discipline Referrals by Grade

- **Intervention**
- **Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K - 1st</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd-3rd</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th-5th</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SACD Study
What Went Wrong?

• Maybe schools did not implement correctly (but no evidence for fidelity effects on outcomes)?
• Maybe control schools also using SACD programs (but intervention schools reported higher used of SACD strategies)
• Maybe SACD programs make the most sense for students who need them? One size does not fit all?
Fast Track Project

- 7,606 students from 55 schools and 401 1st grade classrooms of whom 845 were high risk
- All students received universal intervention (PATHS curriculum also in SACD study)
- At-risk students received tutoring, social skills training, and parent education
- Random assignment and 3 year evaluation

Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group
Fast Track
Y1 Results for At-Risk Youth

• Social Cognitive - 6 of 8 significant
• Peer Relations - 2 of 5 significant
• Parenting - 4 of 13 significant
• Learning - 1 of 2 significant
• Child Behavior - 4 of 12 significant

• **Summary** - 17 of 40 (43%) significant

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Fast Track
Y3 Results for At-Risk Youth

- Social Cognitive - 0 of 2 significant
- Peer Relations - 0 of 2 significant
- Parenting - 2 of 4 significant
- Learning - 0 of 3 significant
- Child Behavior - 5 of 8 significant
- **Summary** - 7 of 19 (37%) significant

*Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 2004, 33:4, 650-661*
Fast Track: Effect Size of Significant Results

![Effect Size Chart]

- **Outcome**
  - Soc Cog
  - Peer Rel
  - Parent
  - Learning
  - Child
  - Beh

- **Effect Size**
  - Small
  - Moderate

- **Year**
  - Year 1
  - Year 3
Ecological Models for Behavior

• Goal is to understand behavior in context and as influenced by multiple levels of the ecological environment
  – Behavior is understood as adaptive given specific contexts

• Enhancing local resources and serving community development
  – Intervention driven by local norms and values

• Sustainability occurs when interventions are valued by those within a setting
Ecological Critique of SEL Effects

- Changing settings or changing individuals?
- Settings of convenience or all settings?
- Person X setting interaction?
- **Key question: What works for whom under which circumstances**

Tutoring vs. Social Skills Training

Social Preference

Coie & Kriebel, 1984, *Child Development*, 55, 1465-1478
Tutoring vs. Social Skills Training

Coie & Kriebel, 1984, *Child Development*, 55, 1465-1478
Social Learning Theory

- Bandura studies the effect of adult’s modeling on child aggression.
- First theory to account for cognitions on behavior.
Bobo Doll Experiment

- Random assignment to model or no model for aggression
- Boys especially susceptible to aggressive models by males
- Parents be warned: “Do as I say . . . ?”
Do As I Say?

Not As I Do?
Conclusion

• SEL programs provide structured activities to support children’s emotional and behavioral growth
• But children learn in a specific context and are influenced by the behavior of adults and peers
• As with life, form always follows function
• Conclusion: SEL programs are your friends but only if they get along with the other elements of your program