8-2021

Evidence-Based Program Selection and Duration of Implementation of Social-Emotional Learning as Related to Student Growth and Non-Academic Outcomes

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Evidence-Based Program Selection and Duration of Implementation of Social-Emotional Learning as Related to Student Growth and Non-Academic Outcomes

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education, concentration in Administrative Endorsement

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by

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August 2021

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Keywords: social-emotional learning, SEL, CASEL, social-emotional competencies, academic growth, TVAAS, attendance, absenteeism, Title I, ESSA

ABSTRACT

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This quantitative, nonexperimental study addressed the gap between research-established benefits and outcomes of social-emotional learning implementation as compared to actual instances of implementation. It has been suggested that social-emotional learning as a systemic initiative is necessary for school health (Elias et al., 2013). Additionally, most educators relay some confidence in the importance of social-emotional learning; however, around half report actual implementation within their school (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019).

Focusing on social-emotional learning as a whole as well as the specificity of use of CASEL SELect programs, the research questions of this study explored differences between implementation and usage, length of implementation, poverty classification, student growth composite (as measure by TVAAS composite), and attendance in elementary schools in Tennessee. There were two significant findings in this study. First, Tennessee elementary schools using a social-emotional learning program that is not CASEL SELect were found to have significantly higher attendance than schools using a CASEL SELect program. Additionally, Tennessee elementary schools classified as Title I were found to be more likely to use a CASEL SELect program than a program that is not CASEL SELect.

DEDICATION

I share this accomplishment with my momma, a dedicated teacher who set aside her intention of doctoral work to raise a strong-willed daughter who spent her first two college degrees swearing she'd never go into education.

For Ken, Tradd, and Quinn: We did it!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dive into acknowledging those who have endlessly supported me knowing that I will inadvertently leave someone out; my village continues to raise me each day, and I am exceedingly grateful to you all. The blessings I have been given from above are far more than I deserve.

To my family, who believed in me, supported me, and gave me needed reality checks. Ken, never doubtful that this journey was the best for our family. Tradd and Quinn, whose late childhood has been normed by momma reading, studying, writing, and working; thank you for encouraging me and for understanding shortened bedtime stories and fewer night time check-on-me's so that I could keep on. I pray you always know that every choice I make is made with the belief that it's best for you two. My parents, who have never doubted I could and always insisted I could do even more and better. My mother-in-law, who loves me as her own. Thank you all for riding this ride with me.

Dr. Stacy Edwards, my principal, mentor and friend, who opened doors, provided opportunity, and orchestrated leadership opportunities not because I believed I could, but because he did. I wish every educator had the opportunity to serve alongside you. Thank you for believing this accomplishment made sense, and thank you for serving on my committee. And to the rest of my Johnson Elementary family, thank you for believing in me, supporting me, and trusting me as a leader in our shared "why."

Thank you to my committee members for pushing me, believing in me, and keeping me on the road. Dr. Virginia Foley, my dissertation chair, whose instruction throughout this program has enabled me to re-visualize and re-understand leading and serving. Your patience in

addressing each of my many, many questions and needs for clarification is commendable! When I was first considering this program and was discussing it with a peer, her statement was: “The only thing you need to know about Virginia Foley is that she truly, in her heart, wants every person to succeed.” Thank you for wanting that for me. Dr. Good, thank you for always creating conversation around my research that helped produce deeper meaning and understanding. Dr. Boyd, from serving under your leadership to your work on my committee, thank you for your encouragement and belief in my ability to do.

One of the best parts of this journey has been the friendships fostered by Cohort K181. Thank you Hunter, Kandy, Jennifer, Misty, Lacy, Stacey, and Sara for the part each of you have had in this adventure.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The integrative process of social-emotional learning has found increased credence in recent years as a mechanism necessary for holistic student learning and success. As addressed throughout the literature review, numerous social-emotional learning initiatives that have been investigated in terms of their individual relationship to student outcomes. In addition, there are data that support the notion that social-emotional learning as an over-arching conceptual framework has a positive influence on student outcomes. A summary of research indicated that participation in social-emotional learning provides positive outcomes into adulthood, and improves student academic achievement, behavior, self-efficacy, and executive functioning (e.g. Durlak et al., 2011; Jones & Khan, 2017; Lemberger et al., 2018). As further example, Mahoney et al. (2018/2019) reported that social-emotional learning is connected to the most influential student outcomes when implemented over time.

Statement of Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the discrepancy between established benefits of and stated need for social-emotional learning, and the actual implementation of structured social-emotional learning initiatives within schools. Most educators (88%) report some level of occurrence of social-emotional learning within their school, but less than half (44%) report this learning is program-based or schoolwide (Bridgeland et al., 2013). Atwell and Bridgeland (2019) reported 83% of principals affirmed social-emotional learning and skills to be very important within the school. Their report stated that while 71% of principals reported visioning work and/or planning on social-emotional learning, 57% reported actual implementation within their school. Reports of actual implementation were lower in middle and high schools, as well as in small and rural towns, in spite of equal support and recognition of value.

A secondary problem is the implementation of non-evidenced based or non-structured social-emotional learning programs within schools. Atwell and Bridgeland (2019) reported, in terms of schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, 70% of principals indicated it is necessary to use a structured program, though no specific information was given in terms of evidence-based programming. Evidenced-based programs, such as those that are Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) SELect, have demonstrated through repeated research over time to have positive outcomes for students in terms of academic, social, and emotional behaviors and well-being (Dusenbury et al., 2015). Lawson et al. (2019) advocated for the distillation approach to social-emotional learning, in which pieces of programs or approaches are used as needed to infuse social-emotional learning in the classroom; however, programs or approaches that are not evidence-based do not have a history of established research demonstrating positive outcomes for students. Elias et al. (1997) suggested that a structured, evidence-based programming approach to social-emotional learning provided the framework necessary to synergize the systemic prevention practices of the school.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools having implemented a framework for 4-6 years and 7+ years?
2. Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs?

3. Is there a significant difference in TVAAS composite between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework?

4. Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant relationship between poverty classification (Title I funding or not) and type of social-emotional learning framework (SELect or non-SELect)?

5. Is there a significant difference in attendance between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework?

6. Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in attendance between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs?

7. Among elementary schools in Tennessee, is there a significant difference in attendance between schools that are classified as Title I and those that are not?

In addition, the frequency of high poverty Tennessee elementary schools (those receiving Title I funding) using a CASEL SELect program is noted.

Theoretical Framework

Several foundational theories of human development underlie conceptualization of social-emotional learning and culminate in the Theory of Triadic Influence, which provides a framework of understanding for this study (Snyder, 2014). Cognitive-based theories such as those of Ajzen (1985) and Ajzen and Fishbein (2010) focus on understanding learned responses

and behavioral adaptations. Social learning theories including those of Sears (1951) and Bandura (1961) describe learning as a product of observation, modeling, and interconnectivity of one to one's environment. Maslow's 1954 motivation-based theory and Erikson's stages of development, authored in 1963, connect self-actualization to what is now known as social-emotional competency (Taormina & Gao, 2013). The systemic, ecological theory provided by Bronfenbrenner (1977) suggests that multiple layers of environments influence an individual's development. The Theory of Triadic Influence synthesizes these areas of theory and provides a systemic lens in understanding social-emotional learning. The Theory of Triadic Influence suggests that the influence of biology, social interaction, and environment are providing constant reciprocal impact on an individual and their behaviors, interactions, and intrapersonal functioning (Snyder, 2014).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between length of time of implementation of social-emotional learning and student academic growth, school poverty classification, and school rate of absenteeism. This research further explored the relationship between use of CASEL SELect programming and student academic growth.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to promote better understanding of this study:

CASEL SELect Programs/Evidence-Based Programs

For purposes of this study, evidence-based social-emotional learning initiatives are those selected by CASEL for preschool and elementary school programming, and identified as Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) SELect programs (CASEL, 2012). CASEL SELect programs are evidence-based social-emotional learning

programs identified by CASEL as incorporating each of the 5 CASEL competencies in the program's framework (Lawson et al., 2019). "CASEL SELect program" and "evidence-based program" are used interchangeably in this study. "Social-emotional learning program" or the like, without the "evidence-based" qualifier, is used in reference to programming in general, whether CASEL SELect or not.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined by the Tennessee Department of Education (2021a) as missing 10% or more of enrolled days, regardless of excuse or reason.

Elementary Schools

In Tennessee, elementary schools are defined as those serving any grouping of grades K-6 (H. B. 2653, 2012). For purposes of this study, elementary schools were limited to and defined as those public schools including grades 4 and 5.

Growth

Growth is defined as "current achievement/current results compared to all prior achievement/prior results with achievement being measured by a quality assessment such as the Tennessee statewide tests" (SAS EVAAS, n.d., p. 1). It is important to note that the growth standard as described by TVAAS composite is 0, indicating performance maintenance.

Poverty Classification

In this study, a school's poverty classification was dependent on their receipt of Title I funding. Schools receiving Title I funding were classified as "high poverty," while those not receiving Title I funding were not. Title I funding is an element of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and its amendment, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Schools are eligible for federal Title I dollars if a high percentage of their students (at least 40%) are members of low-income families (United States Department of Education, 2021).

Social-Emotional Learning

For this study, social-emotional learning is defined as it is by CASEL (2020a) and referenced in multiple publications including that by Trach et al. (2018): "Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (p. 11).

Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS)

TVAAS as defined by the Tennessee Department of Education (2020) is:

> The Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) measures student growth year over year, regardless of whether the student is proficient in the state assessment. In calculating a TVAAS score, a student's performance is compared relative to the performance of his or her peers who have performed similarly on past assessments. (para. 1)

TVAAS Composite

TVAAS School-wide Composite indicates a one-year ranking score of 1-5 for overall student growth in each testing subject for each testing grade (Tennessee Department of Education, 2015). The composite scores are clarified in Figure 1. For purposes of this study, TVAAS Composite is further defined as a composite score based on 4th and 5th grades, as the study focuses on traditional elementary schools, and with the understanding that 2nd grade testing remains optional in the state (and thus does not allow for a calculable composite score beginning in grade 3 for every school). Additionally, for purposes of this study, TVAAS composite is a

literacy and numeracy composite, as not all elementary schools received a social studies composite score in the 2018-2019 school year.

Figure 1

Value-Added Scoring. Reprinted from Statistical Models and Business Rules of TVAAS Analyses, by SAS EVAAS, n.d.

Value Added Color	District and School Growth Measure Compared to the Growth Standard	Index*	Interpretation
Level 5 Most Effective	At least 2 standard errors above	2.00 or greater	Significant evidence that students exceeded the Growth Standard.
Level 4 Above Average Effectiveness	Between 1 and 2 standard errors above	Between 1.00 and 2.00	Moderate evidence that students exceeded the Growth Standard.
Level 3 – Average Effectiveness	Between 1 standard error above and 1 standard error below	Between -1.00 and 1.00	Evidence that students met the Growth Standard.
Level 2 – Approaching Average Effectiveness	Between 1 and 2 standard errors below	Between -2.00 and -1.00	Moderate evidence that students did not meet the Growth Standard.
Level 1 Least Effective	More than 2 standard errors below	Less than -2.00	Significant evidence that students did not meet the Growth Standard.

Significance of Study

In regard to the problems specified above, this study examined the relationship between length of time of implementation of evidence-based social-emotional learning program and the benefit of overall academic growth as measured by Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) school composite. In addition, the study examined the relationship between social-emotional learning implementation and other constructs including attendance and poverty classification. While much previous research in social-emotional learning has focused on benefits of individual factors including academics, personal functioning, demographic factors,

and attendance, this study is significant and unique in that it examined several of these constructs in relation to social-emotional learning implementation.

Founded in 2016, the Collaborating States Initiative (CSI) of CASEL supports states in developing standards and implementation practices for social-emotional learning via a cycle of continuous improvement: organize, implement, and improve (Yoder et al., 2020). Since its inception, CSI has worked to ensure that all 50 states now have preschool social-emotional learning standards or competencies, while 11 states have now incorporated those standards in early grades (CASEL, 2020b). CASEL has further supported the implementation of social-emotional learning in 186 countries (Weissberg, 2019). Tennessee is one of 18 states that now has grades K-12 social-emotional learning standards or competencies, and one of 14 states that has PreK-12 social-emotional learning standards or competencies (CASEL, 2020b). In addition, Tennessee is one of 14 states that provides a tool to support schools and educators in implementing social-emotional learning (Dusenbury et al., 2018). For these reasons, a study of social-emotional learning implementation in Tennessee in particular is of value in helping to establish the influence of social-emotional learning implementation practices on student academic growth.

The aspect of this research which addresses evidence-based programming is supported by CASEL's work in extensively evaluating social-emotional learning programs and initiatives based on a rigorous framework rubric. Programs that meet these strict rubric requirements, known as CASEL SELect Programs, are all evidence-based initiatives and are additionally rated in comparison to one another in CASEL's program guide (CASEL, 2020d).

The study explored outcomes in analyzing the relationship between implementation and attendance, and implementation and poverty. Outcomes of this study may allow educators to

predict when students could begin to experience academic growth based on the school's social-emotional learning implementation practices. Perhaps of more importance is the research's potential influence on administrators and decision-makers in understanding the relationship between evidence-based social-emotional learning initiatives and improved individual student academic growth, school composite ranking, and attendance.

Limitations and Delimitations

A limitation of this study, as well as any study utilizing State testing data, is the issues the State of Tennessee has faced in the late 2010s in regard to standardized testing, including vendor scoring issues impacting some grade levels in the 2018-2019 testing year and no standardized testing taking place in the 2019-2020 school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in state-wide school closures. While the schools assessed in this study represent a state-wide sample, this study was limited to public schools in Tennessee, all of which are ultimately governed by the same legislative and department mandates. The study did not explore non-public or non-Tennessee schools, as TVAAS data represents public Tennessee schools. In this study, TVAAS Composite was limited to a composite score based on 4th and 5th grades, due to 2nd grade testing being optional in Tennessee and thus not allowing for equitable assessment of 3rd grade growth scoring.

Due to this researcher's professional training and history as a licensed school counselor and clinical therapist, as well as a professional tie with a CASEL SELect program, there may be inherent bias toward the practice of evidence-based social-emotional learning as being of benefit. To mitigate this potential, the electronic communication focused on collection of school-level demographic information (as designed by this researcher) was piloted by a variety of professional educators. While the electronic communication was sent to administrators

representing all public elementary schools in Tennessee, as defined by this study, responses may not be equally dispersed among region, setting, or other demographic definers. Thus, outcomes and conclusions may not be representative of individual schools or settings. In addition, incomplete submissions were not included in data analysis. The communication was sent electronically via email, and a limitation of the study includes accessibility and receipt of the electronic correspondence. Further limitations of technology use include varying degrees of public availability of website information regarding schools' social-emotional learning initiatives and time frames of use.

Chapter Summary

The presentation of this study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study's purpose and significance, definition of terms, and an initial statement of the study's research questions and limitations. Chapter 2 provides a review of pertinent historical and current literature providing a framework of understanding for the research and research questions. Chapter 3 describes the research methods used in this quantitative study, while Chapter 4 presents the findings and analyzes the data resulting from the study. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the research and contains recommendations for further study and practice.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This review of literature focuses largely on the implementation and outcomes of social-emotional learning in addition to providing foundational knowledge supporting the research questions addressed in this study. The theoretical framework of Theory of Triadic Influence (Snyder, 2014) is used to impact understanding of social-emotional learning and its holistic influence on individuals and outcomes. Thus, the influence of systems and an ecological perspective is seen as inherent in the conceptualization of social-emotional learning. The systems view is incorporated into consideration of the layers of influence on implementation of social-emotional learning, from educator perspectives and the impact of classroom climate, to district- and state-level initiatives and federal policy. History of social-emotional learning, both in recognition of its existence and in its formalization, provides additional context for understanding.

The academic and functional benefits of social-emotional learning are well-researched including in meta-analysis (Durlak et al., 2011). While those outcomes are explored, this literature review additionally includes focus on other avenues of benefit including economics, attendance, and narrowing of gaps that exist among different demographic gaps. Barriers to implementation and initiative success are addressed, juxtaposed with potential mitigating strategies and examples of approaches used to overcome perceived and documented difficulties.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding research in social-emotional learning is that of Triadic Influence, a meta-theory pillared by the work of early developmental theorists (Snyder, 2014). The Theory of Triadic Influence supposes that an individual's decisions and actions are directly related to that person's efficacy, attitudes, and integrated social norms. These elements are

developed through a variety of developmental processes espoused by the pillar theories described below. The subsequent section introduces several applicable theories and their main constructs. The historical significance of those theories provides a foundation for the tenants of the Theory of Triadic Influence.

Health-Related Behaviors

Stimulus Response Theory is a general term combining theories of cognition that detail the learned responses individuals develop from experiences, as well as the behavioral adaptations that occur as a result of these experiences and responses. These cognitive-based theories laid the groundwork for what later became known as theories of health-related behaviors, as the theoretical explanations began to be used for a variety of social health issues such as disease prevention (Snyder, 2014). The work of Ajzen, first in collaboration with Fishbein, continued early focus in theories of health-related behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action posited that human behavior is a result of the individual's attitudes about the behavior and behavioral outcomes, the social importance of the behavior, and the pull of other persons of importance related to the behavior. Ajzen's 1985 Theory of Planned Behavior expanded the Theory of Reasoned Action to include the construct of self-efficacy. Sideridis and Kaissidis (1998) described self-efficacy as a key component of the work of both Bandura and Maslow, further detailed below.

Social Learning Theory

The work of Sears (1951), and the later influence of Bandura (1961), shifted the thinking of Stimulus-Response Theory toward Social Learning Theory (Grusec, 1992). Sears (1951) described individuals' socialization processes through the concept of observational learning, a term later coined by Bandura et al. (1961) in reference to Bandura's Bobo doll experiments, in

that Sears found social behaviors to be learned through the reciprocal nature of observation, modeling, and personal influence on the environment. Bandura furthered developed focus on observational learning as a bidirectional process in that the environment, individuals, and actions all have a reciprocal influence on one another. Additionally, Grusec (1992) found Bandura's thoughts on self-regulation as reliant on the external, in that self-regulation is developed as a result of the modeling of others, and the reinforcement of interaction with others. Likewise, Bandura (1997) linked self-efficacy and its influence on self-regulation as developed through exchange of success history, observation of others, influential feedback from others, and internal cognitions and psychological affect. It is important to note that Grusec (1992) found the cognitive basis of Bandura's shift in thinking led to a contemporizing of the theory under the new label, Social Cognitive Theory.

Social Cognitive Theory as it relates to social-emotional learning can be viewed through the following paradigm provided by Grusec (1992)

> It is important to note that people do not passively absorb standards of behavior from whatever influences they experience. Indeed, they must select from numerous evaluations that are prescribed and modeled by different individuals as well as by the same individuals in differing circumstances. This conflicting information must be integrated so that rules can be generated, or general standards formed, against which individuals judge their own behavior. (p. 782)

Motivation Theory

Perhaps one of the most oft-referenced developmental theorists, particularly in fields of education and the social sciences, is Abraham Maslow. Maslow (1954) developed a Hierarchy of Needs, a behavioral theory grounded in five tiers of needs that facilitate human motivation (or

drive). The theory posits that there is a positive correlation between two neighboring needs, with wholeness developing from fulfillment of the following needs, in level order: physiological, safety-security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (Taormina & Gao, 2013).

Social-emotional learning is a potential influential component of fulfilling the safety-security needs of an individual, as the structures responsible for implementing social-emotional learning are part of the higher-order systems that offer umbrella protections for individuals (Taormina & Gao, 2013). In addition, Taormina and Gao connected Maslow's motivation theory to Erikson's (1963) views on generativity (as opposed to stagnation) to suggest that fulfilling self-actualization needs could come from empathetic thinking. Further research by CASEL (2020b) in the application of Maslow's thinking suggests that self-actualization also only occurs within the ability to have awareness of one's own feelings. Empathetic thinking and awareness of one's own feelings are social-emotional learning competencies: social awareness and self-awareness.

Ecological Theory

Ecological theories of development postulate that an individual's interactions with their environments influences all aspects of development, and that the quality of these interactions is largely responsible for outcomes (Reyes et al., 2012). The founding ecological theorist, Urie Bronfenbrenner, offered that individuals are interactive with multiple levels of environments: the microsystem (family and close interactions), mesosystem (the interaction of the microsystem and community), exosystem (community structures), and the macrosystem (cultural and societal mores) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Snyder (2014) relayed that Bronfenbrenner was one of the first theorists to propose that environments removed from the individual's proximity can heavily influence development. School-based initiatives such as those focused on social-emotional

learning, an element of the exosystem, thus have the capacity to provide significant influence on the individual, classroom, and school (Trach et al., 2018). Bronfenbrenner's layers of environments and environmental influences are in part replicated in the Theory of Triadic Influence.

Theory of Triadic Influence

The preceding historical approaches to understanding learning, behavior, and development culminate in the meta-theory known as the Theory of Triadic Influence, and the influence of these schools of thought is easily seen in different aspects of the Theory. This theoretical approach to understanding social-emotional learning (as a derivative of health-related behaviors) stands on three levels of influence on independent variables related to behavioral prediction: ultimate, distal, and proximal; each of these levels incorporates at least one sub-level. In addition, the theory incorporates three streams of influence on behavior: intrapersonal, interpersonal/social, and cultural/environmental; each of these three streams contains two sub-streams (Snyder, 2014). These streams and their related sub-streams are what Flay and Petraitis (1994) referred to as the ultimate cause of behavior.

The Theory of Triadic Influence operates, in a sense, as a feedback loop, with changes in behavior and action continually evolving based on the input and experience of streams and levels. Figures 2 and 3 provide visual explanation of the multiple influences on behavior and learning. It is important to note that the addition of time as a systemic influencer, presented in Figure 3, is a key component in considering the research questions driving this work.

Figure 2

The Theory of Triadic Influence. Reprinted from Socio-Emotional and Character Development: A Theoretical Orientation, by Snyder, 2014.

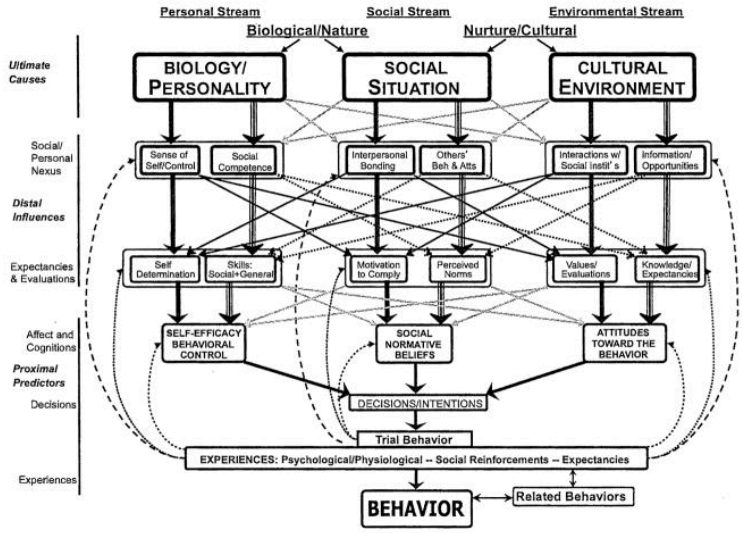
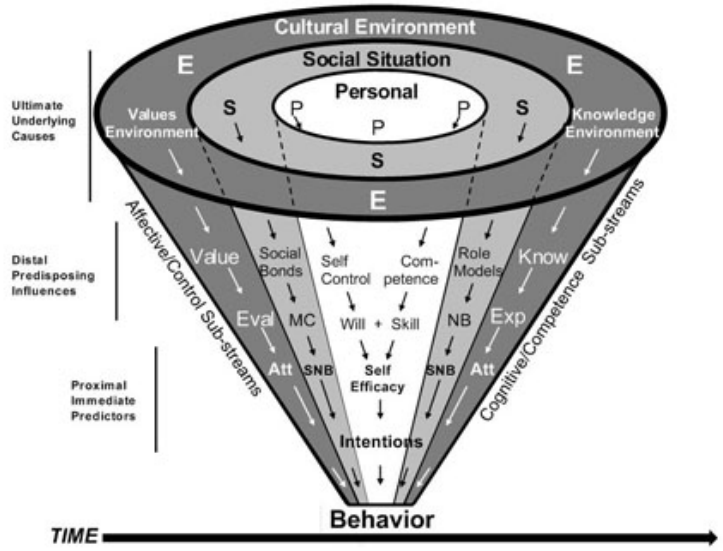


Figure 3

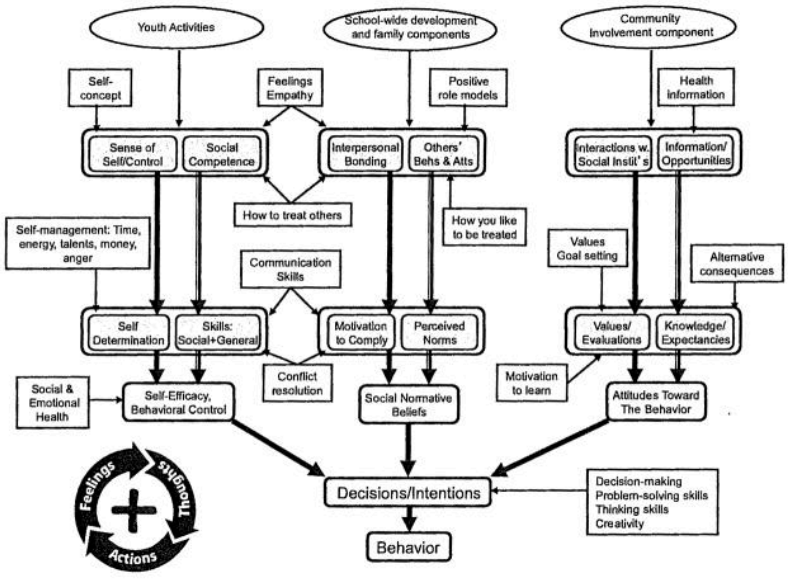
The Theory of Triadic Influence Ecological System. Reprinted from Socio-Emotional and Character Development: A Theoretical Orientation, by Snyder, 2014.



A clear connection to the theory as it applies to an evidence-based social-emotional learning initiative is necessitated for the most transparent and appropriate application of theory to research. Figure 4 maps the Positive Action program, a CASEL SELect Program focusing on six components of self-concept, onto the Theory of Triadic Influence (CASEL, 2012).

Figure 4

Mapping the Positive Action Program Onto the Theory of Triadic Influence. Reprinted from Socio-Emotional and Character Development: A Theoretical Orientation, by Snyder, 2014.



The Theory of Triadic Influence highlights the importance of experiential learning, as relayed in the cultural/environmental stream (knowledge). Another consideration is the property of incorporating each of the three streams of the theory while encompassing multiple levels of the theory (Snyder, 2014). The systemic nature of the Theory of Triadic Influence also mirrors the recommendation of Berkowitz and Bier (2007) that social-emotional learning initiatives should be systemic alterations to being.

Historical Foundations of Social-Emotional Learning

Writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans, those of Confucius, as well as those contained within the Bible, convey strong expectations and outcomes for individuals' behavior

and inter-personal interactions (Elias et al., 2007; Snyder, 2014). In addition, these early writings relay stories and parables based in expressing and controlling varied emotions (most notably anger) (Elias et al., 2007) and demonstrate learning as best when holistic (Plato, ca. 370 B.C.E./2000). Darwin (1872) explored the importance of emotional regulation, while Thorndike (1920) viewed social intelligence, one's ability to interact sensibly with others, as an indicator of overall cognitive ability.

More historically recent contributions to the understanding of social-emotional learning and competency include the work of Sternberg (1985) surrounding practical intelligence, and Gardener (1993) regarding multiple intelligences. Both Sternberg and Gardener viewed interpersonal relationship skills, emotional competency, and cognitive ability as interrelated schema (Elias et al., 2007). Character and moral education appear to be timeless universal constructs as evidenced not only by these writings and theorizations, as well as by the more historically recent institutions of education in the United States, where moral education has shifted from creed-based doctrine to principles of inter-personal functioning and productive citizenship (Spring, 2010).

School-based social-emotional learning received recognition in the 1960s when Yale University's school of medicine collaborated with New Haven, Connecticut, to target at-risk schools. The initiative focused on elements of social change and resulted in academic and behavioral gains for participating schools and individual students. Headed by Yale professor Roger Weissberg and Yale graduate and local educator Timothy Shriver, the partnership endured through 1992, continuing to build focus and research in social development (George Lucas Educational Foundation, 2011).

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

Dewey (1910) first proposed that the skills of empathy and interpersonal functioning were skills to be taught in the educational setting. The modern era of social-emotional learning emerged as an offshoot of Goleman's (1995) theorization of emotional intelligence (Elias et al., 2007). Goleman's work led to both the development of a series of clusters for social-emotional learning, as well as to the formalization of CASEL (originally named the Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning) (Elias et al., 2007). With New Haven having become the center of work in social-emotional learning in the early 1990s, CASEL was based at Yale. When Weissberg joined the University of Illinois at Chicago, CASEL, under his directorship, was moved to Chicago in 1996. At this time the organization also modified its name to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (George Lucas Educational Foundation, 2011).

In its early years, CASEL focused on establishing a strong research base for support of social-emotional learning in schools, collaborating with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) to publish the first research-based book on social-emotional learning. While this research-focused work continues, CASEL has additionally transitioned to providing guidelines and support works for states, schools, and districts implementing social-emotional learning initiatives (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007). The current mission of CASEL is to support the implementation of social-emotional learning so that in the year 2025, 50% of preschool through high school schools have social-emotional program implementation (Weissberg, 2019).

CASEL, a nonprofit organization, is funded through diverse sources including the United States Department of Education, the United States Department of Health and Human Services,

the National Institutes of Mental Health, and multiple private foundations, educational donors, and individual contributors (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007). The following summary provided by CASEL serves to summarize the collaborative's work: "CASEL is unique in education today. It is an organization devoted to improving education by bridging theory, research, and practice – and to pursuing the goals of school improvement and student success through continuing dialog and collaboration with educators" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007, p. 3).

Social-Emotional Competencies

Goleman worked with his newly co-founded organization, CASEL, to define five clusters of skills definitive of social and emotional learning. Targeted skills emerged from these clusters and were later given more specificity by Bar-On in 1997, and Salovey and Mayer in 2006 (Bar-On et al., 2007; Elias et al., 2007). Snyder (2014) suggested that the emergence of focus on prosocial behaviors, those targeted skills such as empathy that emphasize inter-personal functioning, was a result of societal increases in criminal behavior, drug use, and violence among youth developing in the late 1990s.

Kindergarten social-emotional competency (noncognitive skillsets related to engagement, behavior, and interaction) was found to be predictive of adult (age 25) functioning (Jones et al., 2015). While social and emotional competencies are often considered a wide range of qualitative, subjective, non-cognitive abilities, CASEL's (2020c) 5 Core Competencies (based on Goleman's initial clusters of skills) serve to provide the basis of the CASEL SEL Framework:

1. Self-Awareness: The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.

2. Self-Management: The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.
3. Social Awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.
4. Relationship Skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.
5. Responsible Decision-Making: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. (p. 2)

Social-emotional competencies are best developed through social-emotional learning initiatives within the classroom. CASEL has supported the stance that integration of learning via didactic instruction, teaching practices promoting cooperative learning, and integration of social-emotional learning within core content areas are ideal delivery components within safe, emotionally responsive, and supportive classrooms.

Human Development and Learning

The key areas of human development (cognitive, social, linguistic, emotional, academic) are interwoven within structures of the brain, as well as in behavioral and functional outputs (Jones & Kahn, 2017-2018). Learning is influenced by internal and external systemic factors. Learning is a dynamic process in that deficits in one area of development hamper development in other areas, while strengths in an area reinforce other areas of development. For example, effective emotional regulation benefits attention and concentration (cognitive) and academic performance. Jones and Kahn suggested that emphasis has shifted toward academic development while ignoring the relationship between social and emotional development and a child's academic and cognitive growth, while social and emotional focus should instead be an integral

part of educational practices. The research of Denham et al. (2014) supports this stance, with evidence of early childhood social-emotional learning integration resulting in improved behavioral, academic, and functional outcomes for students.

Growth of social-emotional skills in early childhood can physically alter brain organization and operation, and can influence release of regulative hormones such as cortisol (McClelland et al., 2017). As supported by developmental theorists' emphasis on practice as a means of learning, classrooms are prime in providing opportunity for the safe rehearsal of social-emotional skills (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Early childhood classrooms in particular may provide the play-based practice necessary for acquisition of transferable social-emotional competency (McClelland et al., 2017). Additionally, social-emotional competence is seen as a protective factor in longer-term areas of development (Panayiotou et al., 2019). The American Psychological Association's Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education has supported the incorporation of social-emotional learning as a research-supported childhood educational need focused on the non-cognitive skills necessary to support individual functioning (Rikoon et al., 2016).

Classroom Emotional Climate

O'Conner et al. (2017c) found that there are three classroom-specific influences related to student social-emotional learning: instructional strategies, educator social-emotional competence, and classroom climate. From an ecological perspective, classroom inclusion of social-emotional learning is a catalyst for reciprocal systemic change (Trach et al., 2018). Reyes et al. (2012) relayed that the social and emotional interaction between students and teachers creates classroom climate, and that an emotionally rich and responsive classroom climate leads to increased engagement and academic success for students. Indeed, 81% of surveyed principals

believed that social-emotional learning is a key component of positive classroom climate (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019), while 80% of teachers believed social-emotional learning is a resolution to negative classroom climate (Bridgeland et al., 2013). Yang et al. (2018) found that classroom-implemented schoolwide social-emotional learning initiatives were significantly associated with emotional engagement between teachers and students, and cognitive-behavioral engagement among students.

Recognition of the need for emotional elements in learning is a key component in planning for student success (Reyes et al., 2012), and also supports the notion that social-emotional learning is reciprocal in that teachers participating in facilitating social-emotional learning reported a more positive interpretation of climate and recognition of student perspectives (Trach et al., 2018). Finally, positive classroom emotional climate is connected to improved academics and decreased negative behaviors (Rivers et al., 2012). Loeb et al. (2019) summarized that the classroom teacher has effect on academic motivation, student reports of self-efficacy and personal contentment, grade point average, promotion to the next grade, suspensions, and attendance.

Rivers et al. (2012) analyzed data of the RULER Approach, a CASEL SELect program, and its bearing on the social and emotional climate of classrooms. As in the research presented above, outcomes of their study included significantly improved classroom climate as well as increases in cooperative learning. In addition, these outcomes were consistently noted by both participants and observers in the randomized control trial. Specifically noted differences in RULER classrooms, as compared to control classrooms, were positive student-educator interactions, fostered student-educator personal connections, and incorporation of student ideas within the classroom. Additionally, students in classrooms implementing RULER displayed

higher academic achievement, social gains, writing performance, and school work habits as compared to those in control classrooms. It is important to note, given the focus of this study on duration of program implementation, that the RULER analysis was conducted after one year of implementation.

Implementation of Social-Emotional Learning

The implementation of social-emotional learning within the classroom is best as merged into educational practices (Durlak et al., 2011). Implementation is most effective not as an event, but as a continually woven thread throughout academic and social engagements within the school and classroom, and when repeated over the school years (Lemberger et al., 2018). O'Conner et al. (2017a) concluded that both vertical (across grade levels) and horizontal (among the many school, familial, and community environments) alignment is necessary for implementation success. In addition, they advocated for both didactic instruction (skills-focus) and environment-focused implementation, which emphasized the importance of the emotional environment of the school and classroom in developing social-emotional competency.

The most successful program implementation is evidence-based, teaches application, develops relationships within the school, supports academic success, attempts to involve families and community, is policy-supported, provides professional development components, and is considered a process of continual improvement (Snyder, 2014). The continual feedback look of improvement and sustainability should focus on planning, expansion, and assessing fidelity and outcomes (O'Conner et al., 2017b). Teacher training in particular has been connected to the highest levels of implementation fidelity (O'Conner et al., 2017a). Conversely, social-emotional learning implemented without fidelity or organization can have a negative influence on student involvement with learning and staff determination (Jones et al., 2018). Mirroring these thoughts,

McClelland et al. (2017) found that the three key elements to implementation success are implementer professional development and competency, an integrative approach, and family commitment to reinforcement. The following principles guide implementation of social-emotional learning:

1. Create: Consciously create a nurturing, caring, and safe environment for students.
2. Integrate: Whenever possible, incorporate SEL skill-building into academic instruction.
3. Instruct: Provide explicit guidance and instruction in SEL skills.
4. Reflect: Reflect on how social and cultural contexts are embedded into SEL.
5. Respect: Foster respect for one's self and others.
6. Communicate: Exchange ideas about SEL with all stakeholders, early and often.
7. Empower: Enable students to take charge of their own social and emotional learning. (Snyder, 2019, p. 6)

Benefits of Social-Emotional Learning

The holistic benefits of social-emotional learning implementation are well-documented and research-based, though initial research largely focused on the relationship between social-emotional learning and test scores and academic achievement (Belfield et al., 2015). Kendziora and Yoder (2016) noted that social-emotional learning is the foundation of academic success. A 2017 meta-analysis of social-emotional learning implementation suggested that the benefits gained from participation can last 18 years beyond completion of an initiative (Durlak & Mahoney, 2019). Research has specifically linked participation in social-emotional learning to the following outcomes: increased academic achievement/performance, improved classroom

behaviors, decreases in internalizing and externalizing behaviors, decreases in high-risk behaviors, improved executive functioning, achievement increases of 11 percentile points on average, increased self-efficacy, increased persistence, increased prosocial behaviors, improved grades, and gains in standardized test scores (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones & Khan, 2017; Lemberger et al., 2018). Mahoney and Weissberg (2018) relayed gains up to 13 percentile points in achievement. The National Association of State Boards of Education (2017a) reported that social-emotional learning participation increased student test scores 11-17%.

Mahoney et al. (2018/2019) provided evidence that gains attributed to social-emotional learning afford the most benefit when the learning is implemented over time. Social-emotional learning in early childhood has been shown to have influence into later school years, including in emotional regulation, positive peer interactions, positive adult interactions, and in school and academic behaviors including attendance (Jones & Khan, 2017). Additional longer-term associations include the public health element of better mental and physical health, engagement as a citizen, decreased likelihood for criminality, increased likelihood of collegiate participation and graduation, and career success (Jones & Kahn, 2017-2018). Positive reporting of adult marital status has also been linked to individual participation in school-based social-emotional learning (Domitrovich et al., 2017).

McCormick et al. (2015) specified academic gains in reading and math as dependent on classroom mechanisms of social-emotional learning; TVAAS Composite is a scoring of reading and math accomplishment and is an integral part of this study. McCormick et al. found that in elementary grades, academic improvements in those participating in social-emotional learning were largely linked to improved classroom practices of organization and emotional support. These practices were attributed to the improved habits and behaviors of both students and

teachers and support the idea that social-emotional learning is a reciprocal process. One specific caveat of their research was the impression that teachers participating in delivering social-emotional learning are or become more organized, resulting in more efficient delivery of curriculum and improved student academic scores.

The most effective and beneficial social-emotional learning programs follow the acronym SAFE in their implementation: they are sequenced, active, focused, and explicit. Sequenced activities scaffold skills so that students build new knowledge upon the old. Active learning ensures students are dynamically involved in both learning and in their environments, and is the most developmentally appropriate means of skills acquisition. Focused interventions target specifically desired social and emotional competencies, and those skills are explicitly relayed and labeled (Jones et al., 2018).

Economics. Furthering the notion that social-emotional learning is collaborative in nature is research focused on the economic benefit of implementation. Durlak and Mahoney (2019) reported that the return on investment for social-emotional learning programming is 11:1. In general, economic gains associated with social-emotional learning are commonly viewed as programming costs versus the monetary costs of emotional distress, criminal behavior, disciplinary actions, and school disruptions (Belfield et al., 2015). From a jobs perspective, research has suggested that the economic benefits of social-emotional learning and individual social-emotional competency is gleaned from increased work productivity, decreased employee turnover, and taxable earning (Jones & Kahn, 2017-2018). Further, social-emotional competencies have been established as sought-after employability skills (Jones & Khan, 2017), with those individuals possessing strong competencies having accessed up to 30% in wage gains (Belfield et al., 2015). Viewing economic benefit through a societal lens has led to research

finding that economic benefits of social-emotional learning and competencies results in lower rates of need for government assistance programs and, thus, less use of governmental monies (Domitrovich et al., 2017; Jones & Kahn, 2017-2018).

White et al. (2004) proposed that educators should not only focus on programming that is effective, but that is cost-effective. Benefit-cost analysis (BCA) is a process in which the costs of a program are compared to later behaviors or skills (i.e. citizenship behaviors) (Hunter et al. 2018). Using BCA, Turner et al. (2020) found the probability of cost effectiveness of social-emotional learning implementation to be 84%, excluding teacher salary, but noted that cost effectiveness would diminish significantly when considering the cost of teacher turnover. In juxtaposition, cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) utilizes statistical estimates of effectiveness from a short-term isolated measure comparative to the tangible, personnel, and opportunity costs of implementation (Hunter et al., 2018). In using CEA, Hunter et al. (2018) focused on the cost-effectiveness of a specific social-emotional learning program in first and second grades in relation to teacher-rated social skills. They found a large effect ($g = 0.36$) on social skills for grade 2 students in classrooms implementing the social-emotional programming, with a smaller effect ($g = 0.18$) noted for grade 1 students. Hunter et al. suggested that implementation of social-emotional learning may be of most benefit (economic and otherwise) when careful consideration of timing is utilized.

Absenteeism. In the United States, students in elementary schools are absent from school an average of seven days a year, while those in middle and high schools are absent an average of six to nine days a year. The most vulnerable are those in grades 10-12, who miss an average of 10.8 days a year. Seven percent of students in the United States are absent 30 or more days in a school year (Santibañez & Guarino, 2020). Students representing minority populations are

especially at risk for attendance issues. According to Knoster (2016), the following statistics are related to minority students' attendance risks:

- Students with disabilities: 34% more likely to be chronically absent than peers
- English Learner (EL) students: 22% more likely to be chronically absent than peers
- Native American and Pacific Islander students: 50% more likely to be chronically absent than peers

In addition, students that are transient, involved in the juvenile justice system, and from high poverty homes are at increased risk for absenteeism (National Association of State Boards of Education (2017b); further, students have more difficulty exiting the cycle of chronic absenteeism the longer it is perpetuated (Knoster, 2016).

Santibañez and Guarino (2020) found that attendance is positively related to the social-emotional skills of growth mindset, social awareness, self-efficacy, and self-management, with the greatest relationships found between attendance and social awareness and self-efficacy. Bacon and Kearney (2020) reasoned that social-emotional learning practices are a key component of mitigating absenteeism. They observed that social emotional competency was linked to severity of absenteeism, with some skills positively associated with attendance (i.e. ability to emotionally regulate oneself) and others negatively associated with attendance (i.e. perseverance). In addition, the researchers found emotional school engagement to be negatively associated with absenteeism (Bacon & Kearney, 2020) and positive school climate to make attendance more likely (Srivastava, 2018). Kearney et al. (2019) reported the skill of self-regulation to be a key indicator of school attendance culminating in high school graduation. Attendance in later school years is linked to social-emotional learning in that older students with

higher levels of social-emotional competencies and skills have lower rates of absenteeism (Jones & Kahn, 2017-2018).

While DePaoli et al. (2017) found that only 40% of principals thought social-emotional learning implementation could positively impact student attendance, Kostner (2016) suggested that implementation of social-emotional learning initiatives can lead to changes in absenteeism. In Charleston and Lake City, South Carolina, public schools, students involved in a social-emotional learning program had a rate of absenteeism of 4%, while their peers not enrolled in the program had a rate of absenteeism of 12%. Student participation in a social-emotional learning program led to 50% reduction in truancy compared to non-participating peers. In addition, the school reported decreased faculty turnover and a 50% decrease in disciplinary suspensions.

Demographic Discrepancies. Black and male students are two to three times more likely to receive the disciplinary consequence of out-of-school suspension than are their white and female peers, with other minority groups (Latino, indigenous peoples, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students) at a comparatively increased rate of suspension as well (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). However, emerging evidence suggests that in schools implementing social-emotional learning, incidents of disciplinary infractions have been reduced in terms of enactment of punitive discipline on students of racial minority groups (Jones & Kahn, 2017-2018). In several districts and states, disciplinary policy shifts with social-emotional orientation have resulted in narrowing the gap in rates of disciplinary actions between minority groups. Syracuse, New York, public schools revamped discipline policies in 2014 after recognizing their suspension rates for black students were 14% above the national average. The new policy used multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) with occasions for social-emotional learning at each tier of support. Similar recognition of disciplinary discrepancies in Denver, Colorado, and Cleveland,

Ohio, public schools have resulted in systemic change including focus on social-emotional learning (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). Gregory and Fergus suggested that these policy changes improve disciplinary outcomes as well as educator awareness by developing individual social-emotional competencies.

Follow-up data from the aforementioned public school systems demonstrate significant change in disciplinary outcomes after implementation of social-emotional learning-based policy (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). In the first year of implementation of their new policy, Syracuse public schools had a 54% reduction in suspension of black students as compared to the 2011-2012 school year, with suspension of white students decreasing 39%, while in three years Cleveland schools had a 60% reduction in overall suspensions. In the seven years following implementation of new policy, Denver public schools had a 50% reduction in overall suspensions and 7.2% reduction in suspension of black students, representing the largest reduction among the district's racial groups.

Children raised in poverty are at increased risk for behavioral, developmental, mental health, and academic decline. Behavioral outcome data has connected participation in social-emotional learning to improvements in behavior and decision-making in students of high poverty. Of additional importance is that these behavioral improvements were sustained over time (Calhoun et al., 2020). Specifically, Calhoun et al. found that students of poverty participating in the CASEL SELect social-emotional learning program PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) over 2 years had statistically significant rates of change in the following measures as compared to students in the control group: decreased aggression and internalizing behavior, increased social competence, increased self-regulation, and increased instances of prosocial behavior. In addition, students of poverty in this study demonstrated

improved academic performance in comparison to their control group peers. West et al. (2020) found that poverty-based discrepancies in social-emotional skills that were observed in grade 4 narrowed significantly by high school, particularly concerning self-management. Conversely, Kendziora and Yoder (2016) reported that the competencies gained through exposure to social-emotional learning are even among poverty demographics and school location, while O'Conner et al. (2017d) relayed that outcomes for students of poverty are dependent on programming variables. The notion of the compensatory hypothesis, that children of poverty have the most to gain from social-emotional learning, has been shown in research to be the more demonstrated perspective. Importantly, English language learners (ELL) have shown positive outcomes similar to those of students of poverty related to participation in social-emotional learning (McClelland et al., 2017). Gender differences in social-emotional learning outcomes has not yet been established (O'Conner et al., 2017d).

Educator Perspectives

Principals overwhelmingly (87%) relayed that state standards for social-emotional learning should be established (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019). Jones and Cater (2020) reported that 100% of principals recognized the value of social-emotional learning. Additionally, principals reported that implementation of social-emotional learning improves the following: student engagement, student feelings of safety, relationships among students, amount of bullying within the school, relationships between staff and students, school climate, movement through K-12 to graduation, academic achievement, and rates of absenteeism. Principals of low socio-economic schools reported that school climate, movement through K-12 to graduation, academic achievement, and rates of absenteeism are especially benefited by social-emotional learning within their schools (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019).

Though they tend to lack a concrete definition for the construct of social-emotional learning, research has shown that principals demonstrate intentionality when integrating social-emotional learning into their schools' curriculum (Jones & Cater, 2020). Principals overwhelmingly reported that it is their school's responsibility to develop student social-emotional skills and competency, especially in light of societal shifts in the role of parents and parenting, with earlier adopters of social-emotional learning being more emphatic in this assertion. Further, principals' evaluation of their own leadership self-efficacy was largely associated with their confidence in the implementation process of and outcomes of social-emotional learning. This mindset supports the notion, further discussed later, that administrator training and supervision is a necessary component of successful social-emotional learning implementation.

Teachers similarly have recognized the benefits of social-emotional learning, with 87% reporting that social-emotional competencies or skills are of benefit to individuals in the workplace (Committee for Children, 2016) and 93% reporting that social-emotional skills are of importance as part of the school experience (Bridgeland et al., 2013). Furthermore, 97% of teachers posited that these skills are inherently teachable to even those with little or no social-emotional skill foundation (Committee for Children, 2016). Further research regarding the reciprocal nature of social-emotional learning found that in those implementing social-emotional learning there is a negative correlation between teachers' comfort level in implementing social-emotional learning and stress related to student behavior and discipline, as well as a positive correlation between teaching efficacy and job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012). Implementation of social-emotional learning has been shown to be negatively related to teacher burn-out. Rivers

et al. (2012) additionally found that implementation of social-emotional learning improved teacher esteem for student perspectives.

Professional Development

While teachers and administrators profess the power of social-emotional learning impacting students, they may not know the best ways to implement learning (Jones & Dolittle, 2017). Indeed, social-emotional learning constructs are infrequently incorporated into teacher preparation programs or in later educator professional development (Jones & Kahn, 2017-2018; Reyes et al., 2012); only one in three states included social-emotional learning aspects in teacher preparation, and none addressed CASEL's five competencies (Trach et al., 2018). Thus, teachers reported limited certainty in their own ability to facilitate social-emotional learning and support the social and emotional needs of students, including responding to problematic behaviors. (Jones & Kahn, 2017-2018). Teacher confidence in their own competence in delivering social-emotional learning, as well as their own social-emotional competency, are key components of program success (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

The schema of social-emotional learning as an element of systemic change necessitates that teacher preparation and on-going professional development include a focus on social-emotional learning. As previously stated, few teacher preparation programs in the United States expressly address social-emotional learning in their coursework, with only 13% having at least one course that includes information on interpersonal relationships (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). In contrast, the following statistics provided by Schonert-Reichl represent teacher preparation program coursework inclusive of remaining social-emotional competencies:

- 7%: responsible decision-making
- 6%: self-management

- 2%: social awareness
- 1%: self-awareness

The greatest benefit from social-emotional learning occurs when teachers are adequately prepared to implement programming. Of note, 89% of social-emotional learning programs included implementation training (Trach et al., 2018) and 50% of principals have reported incorporating social-emotional learning principles into professional development plans for staff (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019). Teacher preparation in social-emotional learning and development has been linked to the following teacher skills: positive discipline and classroom management, deterrence of student aggression, promotion of positive classroom climate, and execution of cooperative learning (Jones & Khan, 2017). Jones and Khan (2017-2018) proposed that training in social-emotional learning should be an on-going component of teacher training and administrator supervision practices.

Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) found that there are exemplary teacher preparation programs emphasizing social-emotional learning and teacher social-emotional competency. San José State University's College of Education included a fifth-year teacher certification program with focus on CASEL's SEL Framework, while the University of Pittsburg included in their Master of Arts in Teaching program a year-long course focused on teacher social-emotional competency and personal well-being. The College of Saint Elizabeth offered an online credential in the teaching of social-emotional skills and implementation of social-emotional learning. Other teacher preparation programs across the United States included coursework specific to social-emotional learning; Schonert-Reichl et al. defined these as exemplary in including two of the five elements of social-emotional competency focused on future teachers.

In addition, Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) examined individual state requirements for teacher certification. No states were found to require teacher training in each of CASEL's five competencies as they relate to educator competency; likewise, no states were found to have coursework in the majority of that state's colleges of education that focused on teacher social-emotional competency. However, when Schonert-Reichl et al. examined state requirements and colleges of education regarding focus on student social-emotional competency, several states were deemed exemplary. Their worked relayed the following states have teacher certification requirements including preparation in student social-emotional competency:

- Arkansas
- California
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Hawaii
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kansas
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- New Jersey
- North Carolina

- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Vermont

Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) reported none of these states' major colleges of education require corresponding coursework in student social-emotional learning or competency. Their work found only 8% of states' teacher certification requirements and major colleges of education coursework to be aligned, with the most alignment occurring between states in which teacher certification requires some inclusion of social-emotional competency and some inclusion of coursework addressing social-emotional competency. Schonert-Reichl examined 3,916 teacher preparation courses and found that 63% of these courses did not include social-emotional content, while Foundations in Education courses were most often (17%) the courses including social-emotional content.

Public Health

Emerging thought suggests that social-emotional learning is a key component of public health as a proactive and preventative measure (Greenberg et al., 2017). The intra- and interpersonal successes connected to participation in social-emotional learning have been viewed as decreasing risk for negative adult health outcomes (Mahoney et al., 2020). Greenberg et al. espoused social-emotional learning as a public health benefit in that the purpose is to enhance the well-being of the broad population. These researchers worked through the lens of the *prevention paradox* coined by British epidemiologist Geoffrey Rose: "a large number of people exposed to a small risk may generate more cases [of an undesirable outcome] than a small number exposed to a high risk" (Greenberg et al., 2017, p. 13). In this paradigm, systemic social-emotional learning

is a necessary component of future population health and well-being. As a universal public health intervention (a *population strategy* in Rose's epidemiological terms), planning for social-emotional learning does not assess for individual risk; rather, the global value of the intervention results in positive outcomes for the population without need for consideration of individual risk factors (Greenberg et al., 2017).

The prevention paradox and lens of public health do not suggest that individual intervention is not necessary; the paradox simply operates without the consideration. Individual, family, and target group interventions are a necessary component of effective and ethical social-emotional learning. Layers of intervention, such as Response to Intervention (RTI) or MTSS, provide additional layers of social-emotional learning and skill development necessary for the most positive individual and global outcomes (Greenberg et al., 2017).

Further, the universal approach of social-emotional learning implementation, wherein the focus is not on individual students or at-risk groups but rather the classroom or school as whole, supports public health through secondary benefit. Greenberg et al. (2017) found that individuals participating in social-emotional learning promoted those healthy skills and competencies within their families, peer groups, and communities. They theorized that two public health concepts support the wide-reaching benefits of social-emotional learning: "sustaining environment" and "protective shield" (p. 19). In a sustaining environment, newly learned and positively resulting behaviors reinforce continued use of those behaviors in both the individual and others around them, whereas the protective shield reduces the likelihood that the individual will be exposed to certain risks due to development of new behaviors. Greenberg et al. specifically exampled the influence of drug prevention programs in development of both new positive peer groups and new social norms.

Barriers to Implementation and Success

While the benefits of social-emotional learning are numerous and noted, there are barriers to implementation of programming. The Committee for Children (2016) reported that there are a variety of cited barriers to social-emotional learning, ranging from lack of implementation support to funding and resource scarcities. These barriers are often viewed as tiered, with individual, school-level, and macro-level barriers impacting implementation; such barriers range from attitudes (individual) to training opportunities (school-level) to funding (macro-level) (Lawson et al., 2019). As with many matters related to education, 60% of principals cited time as the main barrier in effective social-emotional learning implementation, with teacher turnover and lack of district support also noted (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019). Teachers reported punitive discipline policies as counter-active of social-emotional learning efforts (Stickle et al., 2019). Additionally, 81% of teachers named lack of reinforcement at home as a barrier (Bridgeland et al., 2013). It is important to note that relevant to the concern of time and loss of instructional time, Hunter et al. (2018) found that there were no differences in academic performance between students involved in classroom-based social-emotional learning programming and those in the control group.

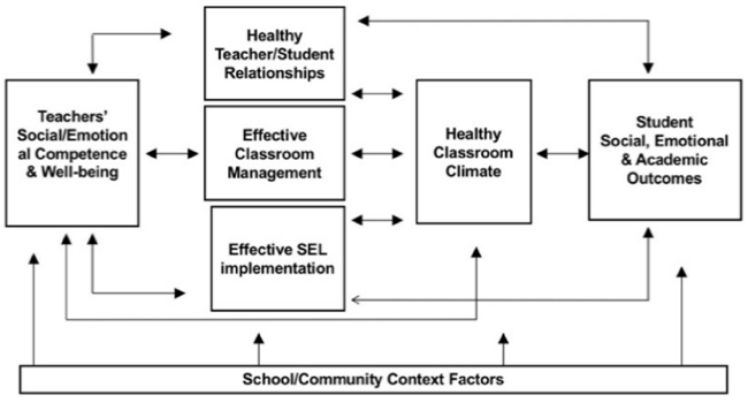
Teacher stress is an additional barrier to successful implementation of social-emotional learning. Teaching is a high-stress occupation, with 46% of teachers indicating they experience routine levels of high stress (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Research has linked teacher stress to student outcomes and performance, including academic productivity. Schonert-Reichl reported that self-reported levels of teacher burn-out were significantly predictive of morning levels of cortisol in their students. Similarly, they noted that in classrooms facilitated by a teacher who has reported levels of high stress there are more instances of diagnosed mental health disorders in

students. Further connections between teacher stress and student functioning include higher levels of student externalizing and internalizing behaviors, and issues with interpersonal relationships. In addition, teacher stress is main factor in attrition, a previously cited barrier to social-emotional learning implementation.

The potential conflict between teacher functioning and student social-emotional competency development is heightened by teacher stress and works against the environment best suited for social-emotional learning. A classroom environment described as warm or positive is a necessary component of implementation of social-emotional learning (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Figure 5 provides illustration of the interplay between teacher social-emotional well-being, classroom environment (climate), and social-emotional learning outcomes.

Figure 5

The Prosocial Classroom Model. Reprinted from Socio and Emotional Learning and Teachers, by Schonert-Reichl, 2017.



Demographic Considerations. Socio-economic, demographic, and familial factors have an influence on all aspects of an individual's development and functioning. In regard to social-emotional learning implementation, hesitance may often emerge from the belief that overcoming these obstacles via classroom-based practices may be insurmountable (Snyder, 2014), as 80% of principals of low socio-economic status schools cited lack of at-home reinforcement of competencies and skills as a major barrier to implementation (Atwell & Bridgeland, 2019). It is important to note that the most effective social-emotional learning implementation, as an agent of systemic change, furthers learning within the school body by incorporating families and community (Snyder, 2014). Additionally, while children raised in poverty are more likely to begin school with fewer social-emotional skills, longitudinal study has shown that academic gains are reflective of social-emotional learning participants regardless of socio-economic status (McCormick et al., 2013).

Social-emotional learning is often conceptualized in a white cultural and English-language framework. Social-emotional programming must account for culture, discrepancies, and power imbalances between those developing and implementing initiatives, and those marginalized within society. Equitable delivery of programming may not reflect inequity in political landscapes (and other systems), discipline processes, or discriminatory biases and practices (Gregory & Fergus, 2017).

Future of the Work

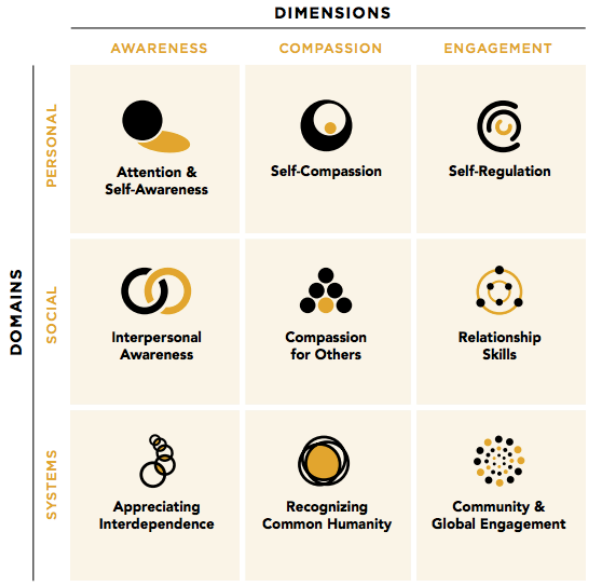
The concept of social-emotional and ethical (SEE) learning began in 2015 as a collaboration between the Dalai Lama and Emory University, and is based in Emory University's Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics (Dalai Lama Trust, 2019). SEE Leaning is described as both "educating the heart and mind" and, by Goleman, as "SEL 2.0"

(Emory University, 2021). This project includes free trauma-informed curricula for elementary, middle, and high school classrooms and includes educator training (Andree & Knaebel, 2021).

The SEE Learning approach is an evolution of social-emotional learning in that it seeks to further the empathy skills and development of ethical paradigms of participating individuals through focus on compassion, resiliency, understanding of systems, and attention coaching (Andree & Knaebel, 2021). The program addresses three dimensions (awareness, compassion, and engagement) and three domains (personal, social, and systems) (Emory University, 2019). Each dimension focuses on the development of specific competencies and skills. The cross-walk of these dimensions and domains is illustrated in Figure 6. It is important to note that while the SEE Learning approach is considered to be relatively young, developers are working toward establishing the work as evidence-based through continued evaluation and research (Emory University, 2021).

Figure 6

Nine Components of the Domains and Dimensions. Reprinted from The SEE Learning Companion, by Emory University, 2019.

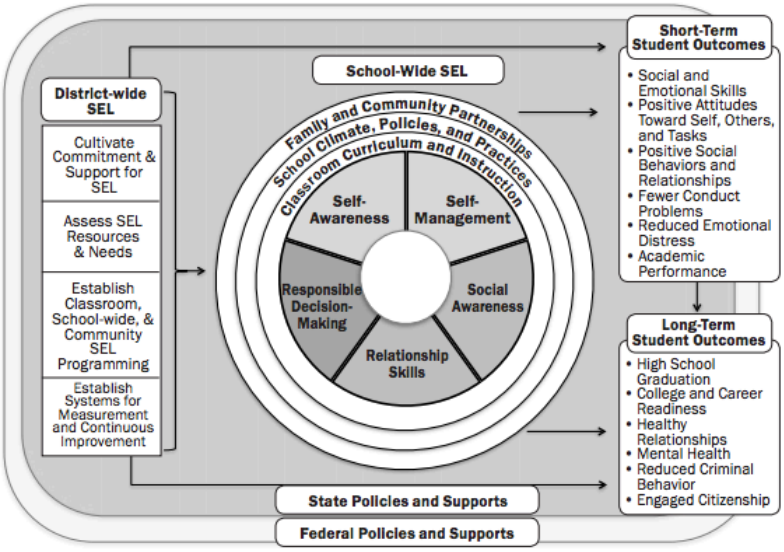


Policy and Legislation

In an educational era in which equitable access is at the forefront of thought, availability of social-emotional learning is seen as an avenue to an equitable learning environment (Mahoney et al., 2020). Systemic implementation of social-emotional learning requires the alignment of practice, policy and standards. The systemic model of social-emotional learning espoused by CASEL is illustrated in Figure 7. This model resembles that of Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological development in that multiple layers or levels of influence gather to impact development of social-emotional competency.

Figure 7

Systemic Schoolwide SEL. Reprinted from Social and Emotional Learning as a Public Health Approach to Education, by Greenberg et al., 2017.



Similarly, Table 1 provides a summary of theories of action that are necessary in the systematic implementation of social-emotional learning.

Table 1

Key Areas in Theories of Action to Promote Systemic SEL at the School, District, and State Levels

	Theory of Action		
Key Area	School	District	State
Build Foundational Support and Plan	Establish implementation team; vision work; needs assessment	Develop shared plan; engage diverse stakeholders; resource alottment	Develop vision; engage diverse stakeholders; create policy/legislation; create organizational structure; funding streams
Strengthen Adult SEL Competencies and Capacity	Model SEL; participate in adult learning and ownership of SEL	Professional development opportunities; strengthen cultural competence and ownership of SEL	Professional development; strengthen cultural competence and ownership of SEL; guidance on school culture that supports SEL
Promote SEL for Students	Coordinate approaches in SEL delivery (classrooms, school, family, community)	Develop standards; adopt evidence-based programs; partnerships	Provide standards; provide guidance for implementation
Practice Continuous Improvement	Develop structure for ongoing assessment; review outcomes data; take data-informed next steps	Plan for improvement; review outcomes data; take data-informed next steps	Provide assessment tools; assess state-level outcomes data; take data-informed next steps

Note. SEL = social and emotional learning. Adapted from Systemic Social and Emotional Learning: Promoting Educational Success for All Preschool to High School Students, by J. L. Mahoney et al., 2020, p. 4. Copyright 2020 from American Psychological Association.

Nationwide Examples and Federal Policy

In 2004 the state of Illinois became the first to develop K-12 social-emotional targets for students (Jones & Cater, 2020). At publication, Jones and Cater reported that the majority of states have some degree of social-emotional learning mandate, due in large part to Title IV (Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students) of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and its replacement, the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA falls short of requiring the development of social-emotional learning and competencies as a federal mandate but encourages individual states to create their own guidelines and accountability measures (Jones & Cater, 2020; Gregory and Fergus, 2017). However, ESSA does require individual states to utilize an added measure of school quality or pupil success not academically-based (West et al., 2020). When states choose to use social-emotional learning for this indicator, CASEL's Chief Knowledge Officer, Roger Weissberg, cautioned that data should be interpreted at the local level only, and not comparatively among districts. A coalition of districts in California piloted using chronic absenteeism as this additional indicator under the premise that attendance is indicative of social-emotional competency and can be comparative among districts (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2017a). Similarly, Ferguson (2016) explained that measures of engagement, safety, and climate may provide the comparative data states often desire, while representing the work of social-emotional programming and competency development.

ESSA provides several funding streams for social-emotional learning initiative implementation. For example, ESSA provides funds specifically targeting educator professional development in social-emotional learning and in training for program implementation (Gayl, 2018; Wrabel et al., 2018). ESSA funding to support social-emotional learning is accessible to local education agencies (LEAs) and state education agencies (SEAs) and typically requires a

needs assessment aligned with application. Of note, ESSA requires implementation of evidence-based programming when those federal dollars are the source of funding (Wrabel et al., 2018). The Center for Research and Reform in Education at Johns Hopkins University provides a web-based tool that assess social-emotional learning programs that meet the evidence standards of ESSA (https://www.evidenceforessa.org/programs/social-emotional).

Since 2013, social-emotional learning has gained bipartisan support in sessions of Congress (O'Conner et al., 2017b). While the following stand-alone bills and amendments focused on social emotional learning have been introduced, none have moved beyond sub-committee. The proposed legislation, accessible through Congress' Legislative Search Results website at https://www.congress.gov, addressed a variety of known barriers to social-emotional learning implementation including teacher candidate training, educator professional development, and funding.

- H.R. 4646 (116th Congress, 2019) Social and Emotional Learning for Families (SELF) Act of 2019 (Rep. Tim Ryan, D-OH)
- H.R. 4220 (116th Congress, 2019) Chronic Absenteeism Reduction for Every School (CARES) Act (Rep. Tim Ryan, D-OH and Jaime Herrera (Beutler, R-WA)
- H.R. 4221 (116th Congress, 2019) Teacher Health and Wellness Act (Rep. Tim Ryan, D-OH; Rep. Mike Bost, R-IL; Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-PA; Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-MD; Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, D-CA; Rep. Jahana Hayes, D-CT; Rep. Cynthia Axne, D-IA; Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-DC)
- H.R. 6120 (115th Congress, 2018) SELF Act of 2018 (Rep. Tim Ryan, D-OH)
- H.R. 497 (114th Congress, 2015) Supporting Emotional Learning Act (Rep. Susan Davis, D-CA)

- H.R. 850 (114th Congress, 2015) Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2015 (Rep. Tim Ryan, D-OH; Rep. Susan Davis, D-CA; Rep. David Loebsack, D-IA; Rep. John Yarmuth, D-KY; Rep. Matt Cartwright, D-PA; Rep. Charles Rangel, D-NY; Rep. Aaron Schock, R-IL; Rep. James Langevin, D-RI; Rep. Tony Cardenas, D-CA; Rep. Elizabeth Esty, D-CT; Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-CA; Rep. Peter DeFazio; D-OR; Rep. Michael Honda, D-CA; Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, D-CA; Rep. Donald Beaver, D-VA)
- S. 897 (114th Congress, 2015) Jesse Lewis Empowering Educators Act (Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-CT; Sen. Christopher Murphy, D-CT; Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-WA)
- H.R. 4509 (113th Congress, 2014) Supporting Emotional Learning Act (Rep. Susan Davis, D-CA; Rep. Tim Ryan, D-OH; Rep. Tony Cardenas, D-CA; Rep. Charles Rangel, D-NY)

State-Level Policy

McKown (2017) suggested that policy change is necessary beginning at the state level in terms of social-emotional learning, and certainly at the district level. Teachers have reported that social-emotional standards should be specified at the state level (Bridgeland et al., 2013). Research has supported this notion, demonstrating that such standards improve social-emotional instruction, school connectedness, and academics (Bridgeland et al., 2013).

First, policy should necessitate clearly developed and defined standards for social-emotional learning and its implementation; CSI provides a model of practice for such policy at the state level (McKown, 2017). Bridgeland et al. (2013) supported the cooperation of states in creating Common Core standards for social-emotional learning, while Rikoon et al. (2016) echoed this sentiment and added a call for the development of standardized benchmarks to assess gains in

competency. Second, district social-emotional learning policy development should be incentivized by states as a means of ensuring rigor and outcomes. Additionally, mandatory professional development in social-emotional learning should be incorporated as a requirement of evidenced-based practice as well as best practice. This training should begin in teacher-preparation programs, which overall lack focus on social-emotional skills, competencies, and learning means (McKown, 2017). Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) furthered this by recommending that state policies require teacher preparation programs to include training in social-emotional learning. Finally, state-level financial investment in social-emotional learning and research would help to ensure adequate assessment of and further depth of implementation of social-emotional learning (McKown, 2017).

Additionally, CSI provides the following recommendations for SEAs in developing and implementing standards, guidelines, and policies:

1. Clearly stated, freestanding learning goals with age-appropriate benchmarks to articulate goals for student SEL, preschool through high school.
2. Are integrated and aligned with academic content and standards.
3. Incorporate guidelines about teacher practices that support social and emotional development.
4. Include guidelines on how to create positive learning environment.
5. Are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
6. Link to strategies and tools to enhance implementation. (Dusenbury & Yoder, 2017, p. 2)

These recommendations, along with detailed descriptors and links to exemplary state-level programming, are included in CASEL's recommendations document (https://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Key-Features-final-2-22-17.pdf). Further, Jones et al. (2018) relayed that entities should enlist a decision-making process, included in their publication, in selecting appropriate programming for social-emotional learning. As a complimentary support to the suggested course of action, Jones et al. (2017) provided a workbook to facilitate the program selection process. The purpose of these supplementary materials is to support a data-driven implementation approach for LEAs, SEAs, and individual schools.

District-Based Initiatives

While the majority of research has focused on social-emotional learning and the classroom, Kendziora and Yoder (2016), through their work with CASEL and the American Institutes for Research (AIR), recommended that all districts should study prioritizing social-emotional learning as a district policy and best practice. The Collaborating Districts Initiative (CDI), partner program of CSI through CASEL, focuses on district enactment of social-emotional learning including program selection, educator development and training, and district accountability. The eight districts initially involved received grants of $250,000 (renewable for up to 6 years) to aid in implementation, representing an average of 0.04% of the districts' annual budget. These grants, as well as the funding streams available through ESSA, provide a level of remedy for the funding concerns often cited as a barrier to implementation. In addition, district policy serves to balance the barrier of time in that social-emotional learning is given importance akin to other district initiatives, and teachers may feel more supported in their classroom time allotment for social-emotional learning and focus on competency and skill development.

Kendziora and Yoder also suggested prioritizing social-emotional learning at the district level includes:

- Incorporating social-emotional learning, skills and competencies into district visioning and long-range planning
- Assessing needs and resources
- Providing professional development at every level
- Developing district standards for social-emotional learning
- Implementing evidence-based social-emotional learning programs
- Integration of social-emotional learning into all district activities (including instruction and discipline)
- Monitoring implementation for continuous improvement

Chapter Summary

The history of social-emotional learning, including its theoretical foundation, provide a framework of understanding for this study. While the academic and functional benefits of social-emotional learning are well-researched and summarized in this literature review, the review also provides insight in other areas of benefit including economics, attendance, and in lessening demographic discrepancies. The perspectives of educators provide awareness of both the need for social-emotional learning and competency development, and the barriers that impact implementation and skill acquisition.

The literature review serves to support the statement of problem and research questions addressed in this research. The review provides supporting evidence for implementation of social-emotional learning, as well as for the need for evidence-based social-emotional learning programs such as those that are CASEL SELect. Both implementation and evidence-based

program implementation are at the core of several of the research questions that guided this research. Further, the literature review provides a framework for the research questions focused on poverty classification and attendance.

The process of social-emotional learning is systemic in nature, influenced by multiple levels (Snyder, 2014). Social-emotional learning is most effectively implemented when done so as an integration into all aspects of schooling (Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017). The future of social-emotional learning should be vertical in practice, bringing together practitioners from diverse experiences to support cultural awareness and applicability of learning. In addition, practitioners of social-emotional learning should begin working toward a more data-informed and -responsive approach (Blyth et al., 2019). Federal policy, as well as district- and state-level initiatives, can serve to support implementation of social-emotional learning. The implementation of this learning is examined not only for its influence on inter- and intra-personal functioning, but also as a retainer of public health (Greenberg et al., 2017).

Chapter 3. Research Method

This descriptive, nonexperimental quantitative study used several methods of data analysis to examine the seven research questions focused on social-emotional learning implementation. Quantitative research organizes and analyses data in numerical representation, leading to effective statistical analysis (Goertzen, 2017). Because the data collected and analyzed are in some way measurable, quantitative research addresses questions of "what" as opposed to questions of "how." Likewise, while quantitative research may suggest trends or relationships, it does not establish causation. This study explored relationships between variables using multiple measures of student and school success. The study investigated statistical significance and effect but does not establish a causal relationship between social-emotional learning implementation and outcomes.

A main objective of the quantitative researcher is to generalize findings to a specific population, while also providing specificity for replication. This chapter presents the research questions of this study alongside a null hypothesis for each research question. In addition, this chapter describes the population and sample of the study, as well as an overview of the data source, data collection process, and approaches of data analysis.

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools having implemented a framework for 4-6 years and 7+ years?

H_{01}: Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools having implemented a framework for 4-6 years and 7+ years.

2. Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs?

H_{02}: Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs.

3. Is there a significant difference in TVAAS composite between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework?

H_{03}: There is not a significant difference in TVAAS composite between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework.

4. Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant relationship between poverty classification (Title I funding or not) and type of social-emotional learning framework (SELect or non-SELect)?

H_{04}: Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant relationship between poverty classification and type of social-emotional learning framework.

5. Is there a significant difference in attendance between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework?

H_{05}: There is not a significant difference in attendance between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do no implement a social-emotional learning framework.

6. Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in attendance between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs?

H_{06}: Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant difference in attendance between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs.

7. Among elementary schools in Tennessee, is there a significant difference in attendance between schools that are classified as Title I and those that are not?

H_{07}: Among elementary schools in Tennessee, there is not a significant difference in attendance between schools that are classified as Title I and those that are not.

In addition, the frequency of high poverty Tennessee elementary schools (those receiving Title I funding) using a CASEL SELect program is noted.

Population and Sample

The population of this study is all public schools in Tennessee which include grades 4 and 5 and implement a social-emotional learning program. Of the 1,759 public schools in Tennessee, 835 meet the definition of elementary schools for the purpose of this study, as determined by publicly accessible data via the state report card website (https://reportcard.tnedu.gov/schools). School-level information was requested via email sent to the school-level lead administrator for each of those 835 schools to collect information on school-level use of social-emotional learning program and years of implementation. In addition, publicly available information regarding social-emotional learning programming and years of implementation was garnered from district, stakeholder, and vendor websites. The sample was generated from school-level lead administrator responses to the email communication and the information gathered from websites and represented those public elementary schools in Tennessee which include grades 4 and 5 and implement a social-emotional learning program.

Data Source

Value-added models (VAMs) use student test data to forecast what students would achieve in a single year if taught by an average teacher; as this achievement is compared to prior year data, it represents a growth model (Tennessee Department of Education, 2015). TVAAS is a version of the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), the oldest VAM in use in the United States. The TVAAS model utilizes a multivariate response model (MRM) and uses the intra-year reliability approach, in which reliability is determined based on a student's predicted scores if the assessment were to be taken multiple times (SAS EVAAS, n.d.). EVAAS,

the parent framework of TVAAS, has demonstrated validity similar to other VAMs and reliability slightly better than other VAMs. Additionally, significantly high correlations (r = .70 to r = .80) have been demonstrated among year-to-year teacher value-added estimates and evaluation data (Amrein-Beardsley & Geiger, 2020). This correlation is noteworthy in reference to TVAAS validity and reliability, as TVAAS is considered a measure of teacher effect (Kupermintz, 2003).

The American Statistical Association specified "value added measures are only as good as the data fed into them" (Tennessee SCORE, 2014, p. 6). As TVAAS data reflects Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) testing data, a major element of the reliability and validity of TVAAS lies in the reliability and validity of TCAP. Since the state's first use of TCAP in the 1989-1990 school year, TCAP has leaned on norm-referenced, non-repeating test questions (Sanders & Horn, 1994) and has been assessed to have good content validity and reliability (Bratton et al., n.d.). Validity and reliability of test questions are established through a field-testing process involving the Tennessee Department of Education, teachers, and the test developer (Tennessee Department of Education, 2021b). Additionally, test security is enforced by state law regarding breaches (Tennessee Department of Education, 2019). The reliability and validity of TVAAS scoring is further supported by the disassociation of TVAAS/EVAAS with any testing company. However, TVAAS does require that tests must meet the following requirements in order for TVAAS scoring to be considered reliable and valid. TCAP meets these standards.

- Must be designed to assess the academic standards.
- Must be reliable and valid (usually related to the number of test questions).
- Must demonstrate sufficient stretch at the extremes. (SAS EVAAS, 2015, p. 11)

Data Collection

Prior to data being gathered or analyzed, a proposal of this research was submitted to East Tennessee State University's (ETSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB). Data were gathered from existing sources, the public TVAAS website (https://www.tn.gov/education/data/tvaas.html) and the public state report card website (https://reportcard.tnedu.gov/schools). School-level categorical information was gathered electronically via email (contained in Appendix A) from building-level lead administrators of public schools containing grades 4 and 5 in Tennessee; in addition, categorical information was gathered from district, stakeholder, and vendor websites. This school-specific information (use of social-emotional learning framework including years of implementation, indication of CASEL SELect program use, and Title 1 status in the 2018-2019 school year) was then matched to the school-specific data included in the TVAAS website and State Report Card website. Due to current TVAAS Composite scores being those of the 2018-2019 school year, the years of implementation ranges gathered from schools were set to more accurately reflect implementation duration and those composite scores. Ranges of current-year social-emotional learning initiative implementation were: 1-3 years, 4 years, 5 years, 6 years, and 7+ years, as these ranges align with back-dating to TCAP testing resulting in calculations of TVAAS Composite scores for the 2018-2019 school year. The year ranges were furthered condensed to 1-3 years, 4-6 years and 7+ years in order to provide a more robust sample size for each grouping. In alignment with these ranges as well as current TVAAS data, attendance data collected from the state report card site represented the 2018-2019 school year.

Data Analysis

International Business Machines' (IBM) Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used for statistical analysis of data. All data were analyzed at the 0.05 level of significance. A frequency distribution was used to assess the number of high poverty schools using a CASEL SELect program. Independent t-tests were used to analyze the data related to Research Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. In analyzing Research Question 1, the group corresponding to 1-3 years of implementation was omitted due to lack of analogous TVAAS composite score. Years of implementation were grouped into 4-6 years and 7+ years to allow for more appropriate sample size. In analyzing Research Questions 5, 6, and 7, attendance was measured by the percent of students chronically absent and the subsequent percent of students chronically attending, and represented by that number. As in Research Question 1, schools having implemented social-emotional learning for 1-3 years were not included in the analysis of data related to Research Questions 2, 3, 5, and 6, as the related and current measures for those points of research (TVAAS composite and attendance) do not correspond to those school years.

A chi square analysis was used to analyze the data related to Research Question 4. As both program implementation and Title I status were current to the 2020-2021 school year (considered year 1 of implementation), schools having implemented social-emotional learning for 1-3 years were included in statistical analysis of Research Question 4.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a summary of the methodology used in this quantitative study. Research questions and corresponding null hypotheses are presented. The chapter describes the population and sample of the study. Further, the chapter summarizes the source of data for the study, data collection methods, and means of statistical analysis of data for the study.

Chapter 4. Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between length of time of implementation of social-emotional learning, poverty classification, and multiple measures of student outcomes, including attendance and academic growth (as evidenced by TVAAS Composite). This nonexperimental quantitative study utilized IBM's SPSS program to analyze data to the 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study are presented relative to each of the research questions.

Research Question 1

Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools having implemented a framework for 4-6 years and 7+ years?

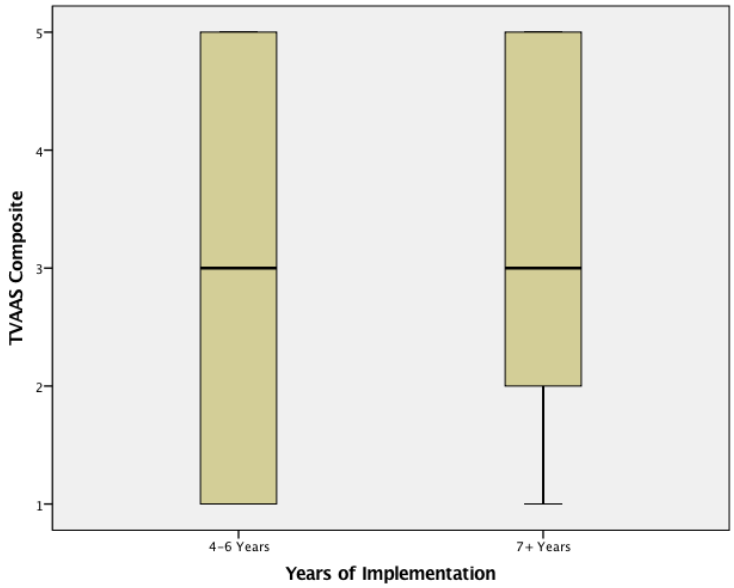
H_{01}: Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools having implemented a framework for 4-6 years and 7+ years.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean TVAAS composite scores differ between elementary schools in Tennessee that have implemented a social-emotional learning framework for 4-6 years and schools that have implemented for 7+ years. TVAAS composite score was the test variable and the grouping variable was length of implementation. The test was not significant, $t(85) = .325$, $p = .746$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η^2 index was less than .01, which indicated a small effect size. Tennessee elementary schools having implemented social-emotional learning for 4-6 years ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.83$) tended to have approximately the same TVAAS composite scores as schools

implementing social-emotional learning for 7+ years (M = 3.21, SD = 1.48). The 95% confidence interval for the difference of means was -.837 to .602. Figure 8 shows the distribution for the two groups.

Figure 8

TVAAS Composite Scores for Implementing Schools by Year Group Cluster



Research Question 2

Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs?

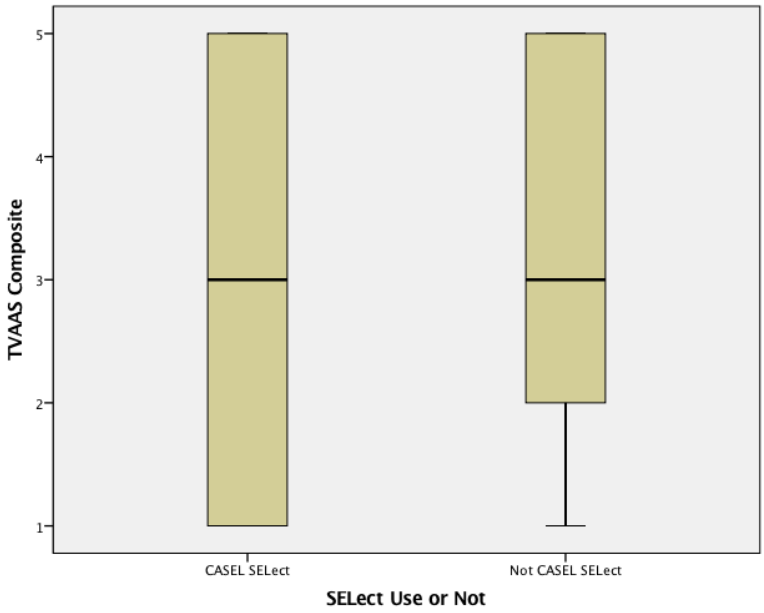
H_{02}: Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant difference in

TVAAS school composite scores between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean TVAAS composite scores differ between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a CASEL SELect social-emotional learning program and schools that implement a social-emotional learning program that is not CASEL SELect. TVAAS composite score was the test variable and the grouping variable was type of program (CASEL SELect or not). The test was not significant, $t(85) = .121$, $p = .904$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η^2 index was less than .01, which indicated a small effect size. Tennessee elementary schools that use a CASEL SELect social-emotional learning program ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.7$) tended to have approximately the same TVAAS composite scores as schools implementing social-emotional learning program that is not CASEL SELect ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.6$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference of means was -.841 to .745. Figure 9 shows the distributions for the two groups.

Figure 9

TVAAS Composite for CASEL SELect Program Use



Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in TVAAS composite between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework?

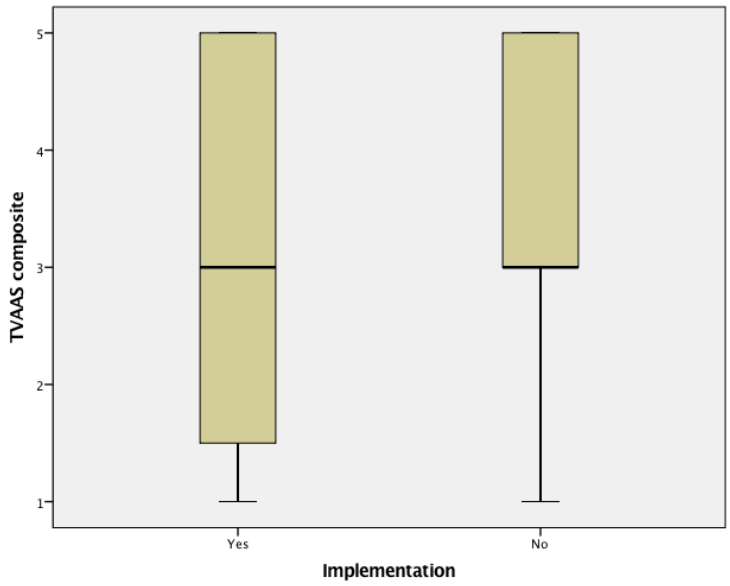
H_{03}: There is not a significant difference in TVAAS composite between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean TVAAS composite scores differ between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning program and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning

program. TVAAS composite score was the test variable and the grouping variable was implementation or no implementation. The test was not significant, $t(118) = .409$, $p = .683$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η^2 index was less than .01, which indicated a small effect size. Tennessee elementary schools that implement a social-emotional learning program ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.61$) tended to have approximately the same TVAAS composite scores as schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning program ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.43$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference of means was -.762 to .501. Figure 10 shows the distributions for the two groups.

Figure 10

TVAAS Composite for Implementing and Non-Implementing Schools



Research Question 4

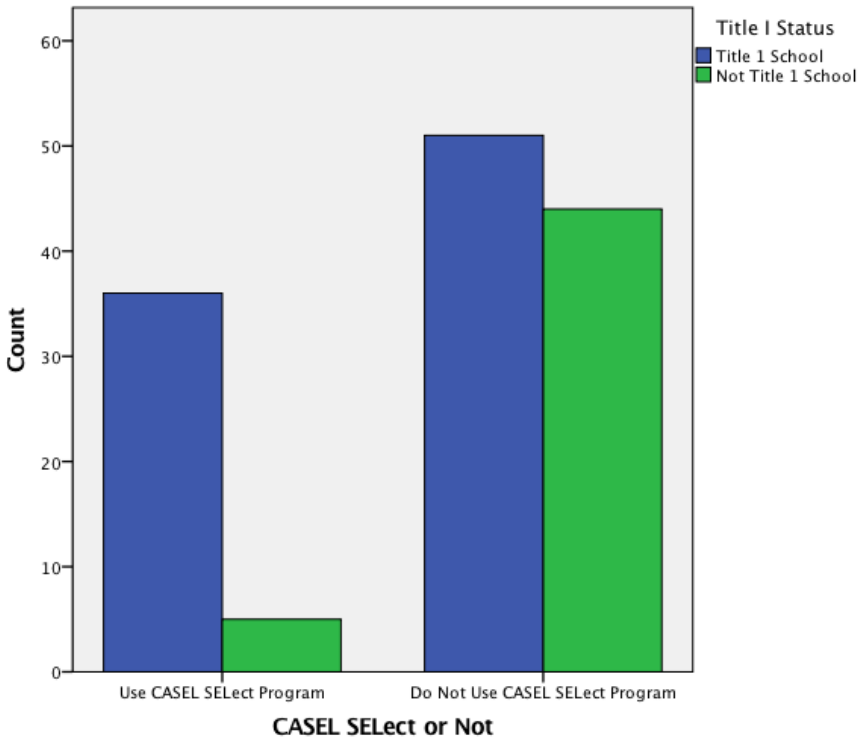
Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant relationship between poverty classification (Title I funding or not) and type of social-emotional learning framework (SELect or non-SELect)?

H_{04}: Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant relationship between poverty classification and type of social-emotional learning framework.

A cross-tabulation analysis was conducted to evaluate whether type of social-emotional learning framework being implemented depended on poverty classification. The two variables were type of social-emotional learning framework (CASEL SELect or not) and poverty classification (Title I or not). Type of social-emotional learning framework and poverty status were found to be significantly related, Pearson's χ^2 (1, N = 136) = 14.47, p < .001, Cramer's V = .326. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. In general, type of social-emotional learning framework used was significantly different depending on poverty classification. The observed count of high poverty schools using a CASEL SELect program in this analysis is 36 (expected count = 26.2). In summary, Tennessee elementary schools that are classified as Title I (high poverty) are significantly more likely to use a CASEL SELect program than a program that is not CASEL SELect. Figure 11 displays counts of type of social-emotional learning framework compared to poverty classification.

Figure 11

Type of Framework Implementation Chartered with Poverty Classification



Research Question 5

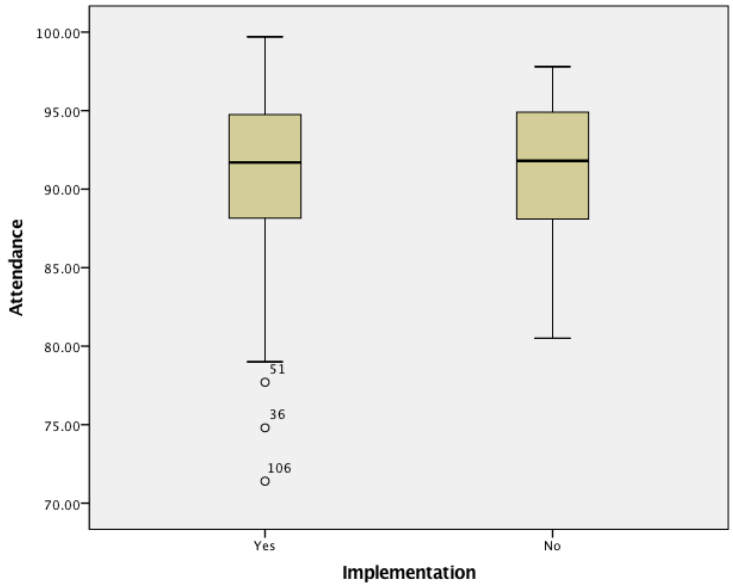
Is there a significant difference in attendance between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework?

H_{05}: There is not a significant difference in attendance between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean level of attendance differs between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework. Attendance was the test variable and the grouping variable was implementation or no implementation. The test was not significant, $t(118) = .134$, $p = .894$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. The η^2 index was less than .01, which indicated a small effect size. Tennessee elementary schools not implementing social-emotional learning ($M = 91.07$, $SD = 4.47$) tended to have approximately the same attendance as schools implementing social-emotional learning ($M = 90.93$, $SD = 5.43$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference of means was -2.24 to 1.96. Figure 12 shows the distributions for the two groups, noting three outliers in the group implementing social-emotional learning.

Figure 12

Attendance for Implementing and Non-Implementing Schools

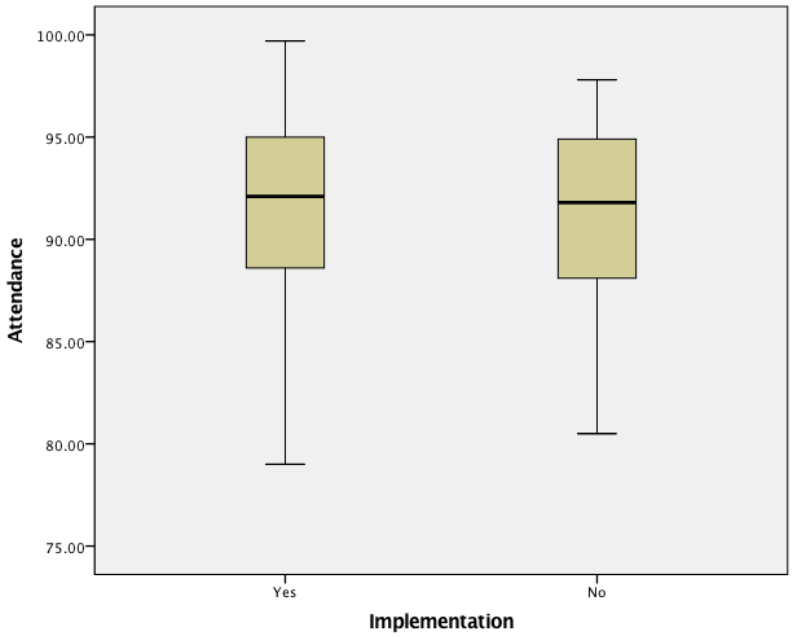


The outliers were removed, and the data were re-analyzed. An additional independent samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean level of attendance differs between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework, excluding the three outliers. Attendance was again the test variable and the grouping variable was again implementation or no implementation. The test remained not significant, $t(115) = .476$, $p = .635$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was again retained. The η^2 index was less than .01, which indicated a small effect size. In this analysis excluding the three outliers, Tennessee elementary schools not implementing social-emotional learning ($M = 91.07$, $SD = 4.47$) tended to have about the same attendance as schools implementing social-emotional learning ($M = 91.51$, $SD = 4.52$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference of means was -1.39 to 2.27. Figure 13 shows the

distributions for the two groups, excluding the three outliers in the group implementing social-emotional learning.

Figure 13

Attendance for Implementing and Non-Implementing Schools, Excluding Outliers



Research Question 6

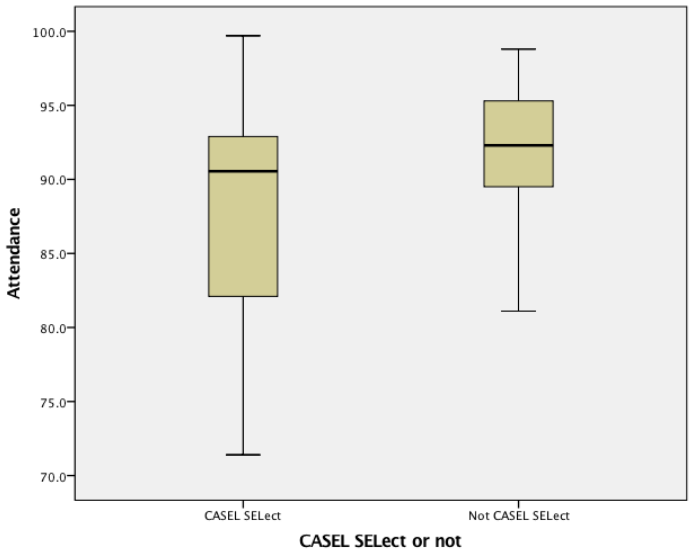
Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, is there a significant difference in attendance between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs?

H_{06}: Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant difference in attendance between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean attendance differs between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a CASEL SELect social-emotional learning program and schools that implement a social-emotional learning program that is not CASEL SELect. Attendance score was the test variable and the grouping variable was CASEL SELect or not. The test was significant, $t(85) = 3.417$, $p = .002$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The η^2 index was .11, which indicated a medium to large effect size. Tennessee elementary schools that do not implement a CASEL SELect social-emotional learning program ($M = 91.95$, $SD = 4.04$) tended to have significantly higher attendance than schools that do implement a CASEL SELect program ($M = 87.91$, $SD = 7.65$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference of means was -.6.57 to -1.50. Figure 14 shows the distributions for the two groups.

Figure 14

Attendance and Type of Implementation



Research Question 7

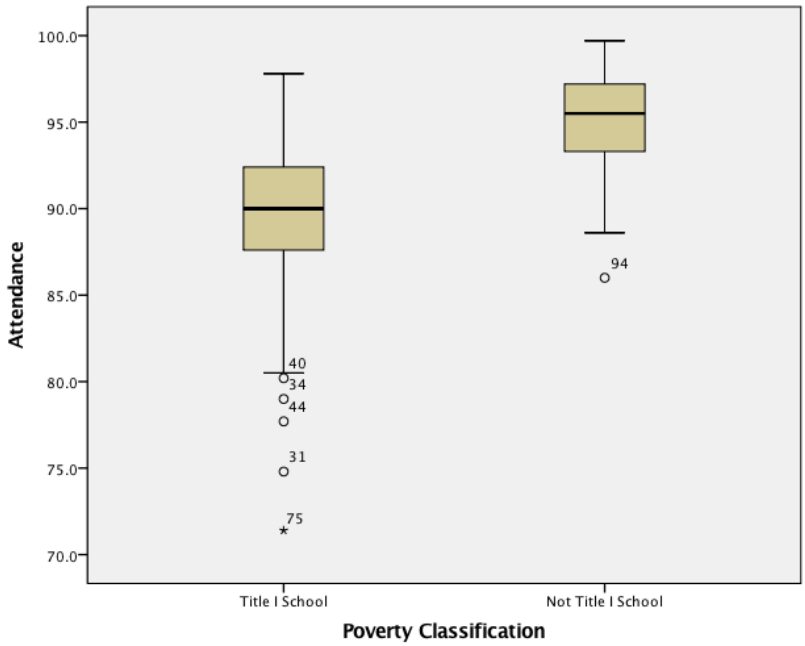
Among elementary schools in Tennessee, is there a significant difference in attendance between schools that are classified as Title I and those that are not?

H_{07}: Among elementary schools in Tennessee, there is not a significant different in attendance between schools that are classified as Title I and those that are not.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the mean attendance differs between elementary schools in Tennessee that are classified as Title I and those that are not. Attendance score was the test variable and the grouping variable was Title I or not. The test was significant, $t(117) = 6.33$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The η^2 index was .36, which indicated a large effect size. Tennessee elementary schools that are not classified as Title I ($M = 95.1$, $SD = 2.92$) tended to have significantly higher attendance than schools that are classified as Title I ($M = 89.31$, $SD = 4.92$). The 95% confidence interval for the difference of means was -.7.59 to -3.98. Figure 15 shows the distributions for the two groups, including outliers. A second independent t-test was conducted with removal of outliers, with similar results and significance.

Figure 15

Attendance and Title I Classification, Including Outliers



Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the statistical analysis of data related to the study's seven research questions and one frequency count. In summary, the null hypotheses were retained for Research Questions 1, 2, 3, and 5:

- Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools having implemented a framework for 4-6 years and 7+ years.

- Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is not a significant difference in TVAAS school composite scores between schools using CASEL SELect programs and those not using CASEL SELect programs.
- There is not a significant difference in TVAAS composite between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework.
- There is not a significant difference in attendance between elementary schools in Tennessee that implement a social-emotional learning framework and schools that do not implement a social-emotional learning framework. Removing outliers from the group implementing social-emotional learning did not impact the significance in terms of outcome of the analysis.

The null hypotheses were rejected for Research Questions 4, 6, and 7:

- Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, there is a significant relationship between poverty classification and type of social-emotional learning framework.
- The observed count of high poverty schools using a CASEL SELect program (36) is significantly higher than the expected count (26.2).
- Of Tennessee elementary schools implementing social-emotional learning frameworks, schools that do not use a CASEL SELect program have significantly higher attendance than schools that use a CASEL SELect program.

- Among elementary schools in Tennessee, schools that are not classified as Title I have significantly higher attendance than schools that are classified as Title I.

In addition, the data analyzed in Research Question 4 yielded a count of high poverty schools using a CASEL SELect framework. The outcomes of this study are further discussed in Chapter 5, including interpretation and conclusions of the findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

While the benefits of social-emotional learning have been established by researchers including Durlak et al. (2011), Jones and Khan (2017), and Lemberger et al. (2018), there remain schools that do not implement any type of social-emotional learning framework. In addition, the use of evidence-based programs, such as those that are CASEL SELect, have been espoused by Elias et al. (1997) as a structure necessary in unifying various non-academic and academic endeavors within schools. This study explored the problems of established benefits of social-emotional learning juxtaposed against actual implementation, as well as the idea of necessity for frameworks to be evidence-based as compared to those actually implemented.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the usage and duration of implementation of social-emotional learning initiatives and student and school outcomes. In doing so, this study examined existing understanding of the academic benefits of social-emotional learning initiatives and provided more specificity in both focusing on evidence-based programming and the implementation practice of duration. The study explored the relationship between implementation and student growth, implementation and attendance, and implementation and poverty status.

Discussion

The research questions considered in this study coupled implementation of social-emotional learning, or lack thereof, with student growth and attendance, both of which are considered to be measures of school success. The study further considered implementation in two categories: CASEL SELect programs and social-emotional learning frameworks that are not CASEL SELect. Along with data focused on student growth and attendance, this study

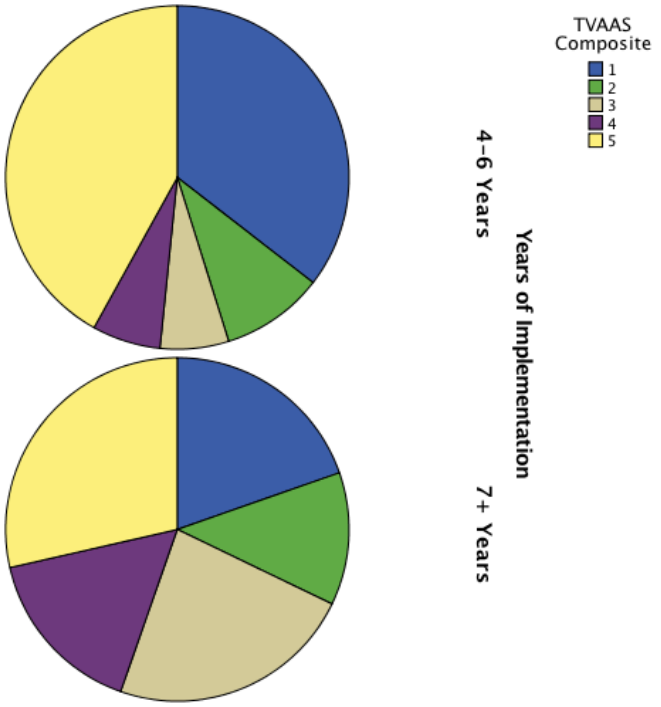
considered poverty classification and years of implementation in relation to social-emotional learning.

Duration of Implementation

Research Question 1 addressed duration of implementation and TVAAS composite. Although the analysis of data did not result in a significant difference, both groups (4-6 years and 7+ years) implemented a social-emotional learning framework and had mean TVAAS composites indicating maintenance rather than learning loss. The 7+ years group had a more even distribution of composite scores than the 4-6 years group, as shown in Figure 16. In addition, the 7+ years group had higher numbers of 3+ composite scores as compared to the 4-6 years implementation group. When considering back-dating of these implementation year groups to coincide with the current TVAAS data (2018-2019 school year), it is important to note that the 4-6 years group TVAAS composite scores are reflective of their first years of social-emotional learning implementation. As the 4-6 years group had a considerably higher number of TVAAS composite 5 scores, it is reasonable to suggest that social-emotional learning implementation may spur academic growth in the early years of implementation. In addition, as the 7+ years group had lower occurrences of TVAAS composite 1 and 2 scores, it is reasonable to suggest that longer-term implementation may have an impact on mitigating learning losses.

Figure 16

Scores for Research Question 1



The idea of a settling in, as suggested by the leveling of scores and lower occurrences of TVAAS composite 5 scores in the 7+ years groups as compared to the 4-6 years group, coincides with Fullan's (2001) idea of the implementation dip, a common phenomenon associated with change initiatives. Within the implementation dip, excitement and energy once directed toward change (i.e. the implementation of a new social-emotional learning framework) wanes as implementors settle into maintenance and routine. Conversely, the 4-6 years group demonstrated a larger number of TVAAS composite scores of 2 and 1. This could be a sign of implementation

resistance, a notion that should be anticipated with any new initiative (Shirley & Noble, 2016). With these concepts in mind, educators will need to be aware of the potential for stagnancy in later years of framework implementation, as well as for the potential for resistance to change in earlier years. Such implications for practice are further addressed in this chapter.

Implementation Practices and TVAAS Composite

Research Question 2 provided specificity of implementation, as the analysis reviewed type of programming (CASEL SELect or not) in relation to TVAAS composite, while Research Question 3 reviewed social-emotional learning implementation (or not) and TVAAS composite. A significant difference was not found between type of programming and TVAAS composite, nor between implementation (or not) and TVAAS composite. As noted in Figure 17, the percentages of each TVAAS composite score for both types of programming (CASEL SELect or not) are similar. This suggests that the implementation of programming, rather than the type of programming, may be of basic importance. However, Figure 18 is comparable in noting percentages of TVAAS composite relative to implementation.

Figure 17

TVAAS Composite and Type of Social-Emotional Learning Framework

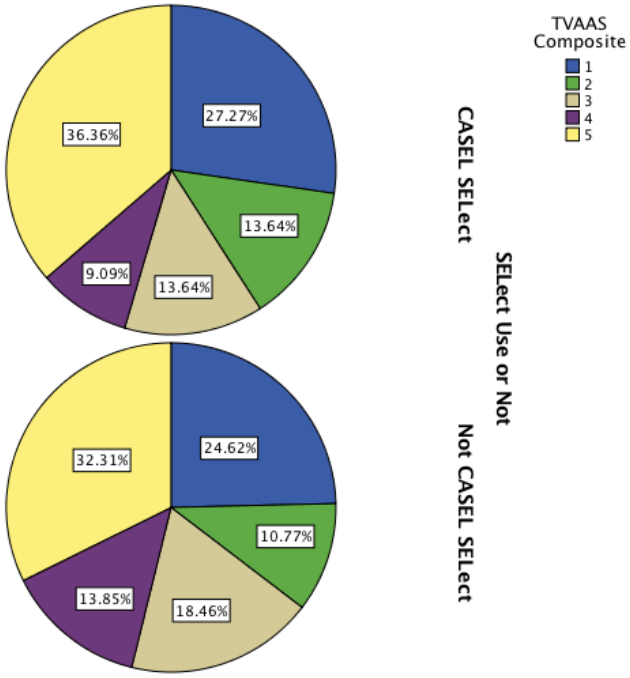
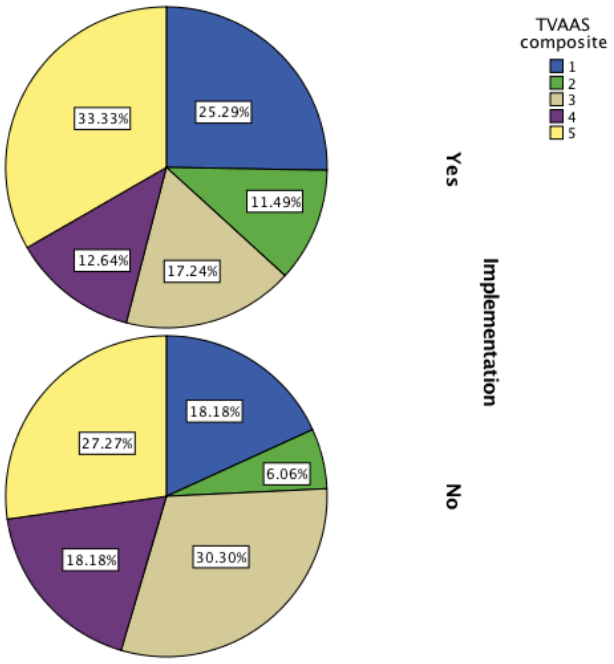


Figure 18

TVAAS Composite and Implementation



Both Figures 17 and 18 show a higher percentage of high and low TVAAS composite scores for those schools implementing CASEL SELect frameworks, and those schools implementing any social-emotional learning framework as compared to their opposing group. Additionally, nearly 1/3 of schools not implementing social-emotional learning demonstrate performance maintenance (TVAAS composite 3). While this is certainly desirable compared to learning loss, the more desirable outcome of significant growth is evidenced by 1/3 of those schools implementing social-emotional learning having a TVAAS composite of 5. It is of interest to explore the idea of high risk/high reward thinking in regard to this finding: Are schools that have demonstrated learning loss (TVAAS composite 1 or 2) implementing social-emotional

learning as a risk, striving for higher reward? Potential reasoning for this will be further discussed and connected to Research Question 4, examining the poverty classification of schools and their framework usage.

Implementation Practices, Poverty Classification, and Attendance

Scatterplots generated from the publicly accessible TVAAS site (https://tvaas.sas.com/welcome.html?as=c) and representing all schools in Tennessee provide insight in conceptualizing the influence of poverty on academic proficiency and growth. Overall, academic proficiency is positively related to economic prevalence, as shown in Figures 19 and 20. However, as shown in Figures 21 and 22, academic growth does not appear to have a linear relationship to economic prevalence. These figures support the idea that all students, regardless of poverty classification and proficiency baseline, are capable of academic growth.

Figure 19

4th grade ELA (left) and Math (right) Proficiency and Economic Prevalence

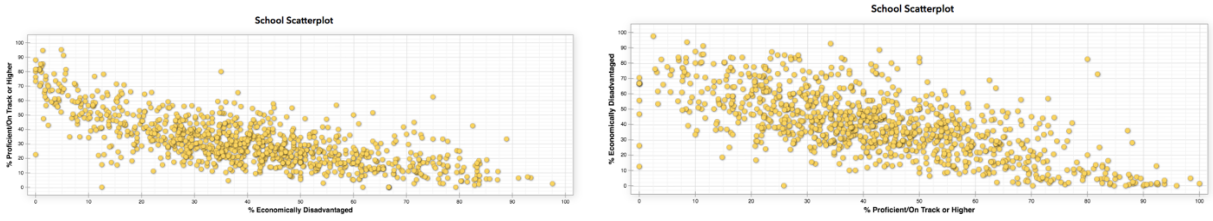


Figure 20

5th Grade ELA (left) and Math (right) Proficiency and Economic Prevalence

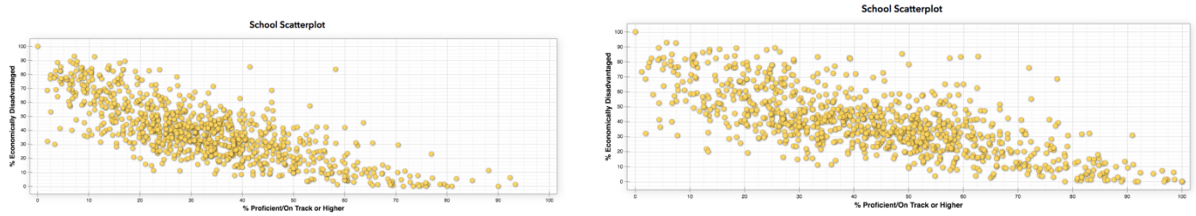


Figure 21

4th Grade ELA (left) and Math (right) Growth and Economic Prevalence

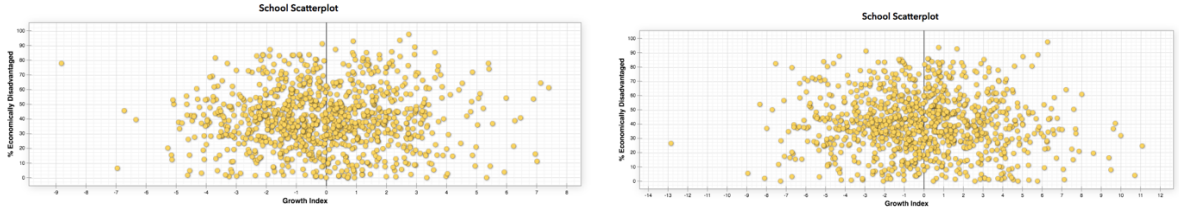
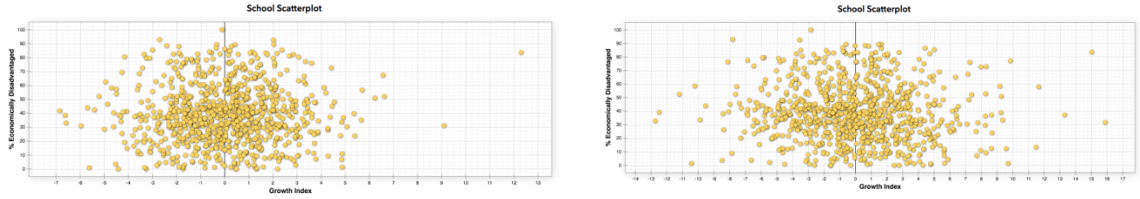


Figure 22

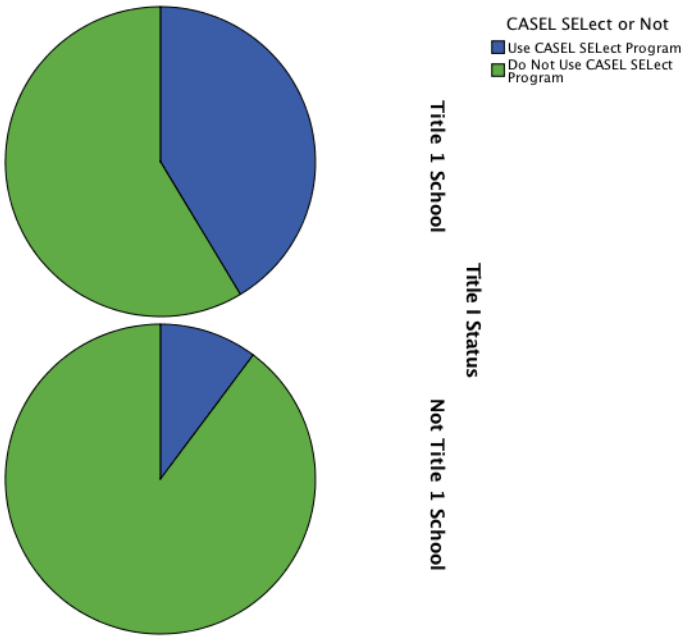
5th Grade ELA (left) and Math (right) Growth and Economic Prevalence



As briefly discussed with Research Question 3, Research Question 4 explored poverty classification (Title I or not) and type of program used (CASEL SELect or not). Shown in Figure 23, a significant difference was found, with Title I schools more likely to use a CASEL SELect program than a program that is not CASEL SELect.

Figure 23

Poverty Classification and Type of Social-Emotional Learning Framework



Findings of this study indicated that high poverty schools are significantly more likely to implement a CASEL SELect program. The findings of Research Question 6, discussed further, additionally demonstrated that schools using CASEL SELect programs likely have lower attendance than schools not using CASEL SELect programs. Connecting these questions yields

the potential conclusion that high poverty schools have lower attendance and use CASEL SELect programs, more so than non-Title I schools. The findings of Research Question 7, added later in the study to substantiate this conclusion, supported this conclusion and demonstrated that schools with high poverty were more likely to have lower attendance. Research also substantiates this outcome, as the National Association of State Boards of Education (2017b) reported students from high poverty homes are more likely to have issues with absenteeism. It stands to reason, then, that the most at-risk schools implemented social-emotional learning and were more likely to use a CASEL SELect program, with attendance being more connected to poverty classification than to social-emotional learning implementation. While the findings of Research Question 5 were not significant, removing outliers demonstrated a slightly higher mean in attendance for implementors as compared to non-implementors. As Bacon and Kearney (2020) detailed, attendance gains are related to the social-emotional competencies developed through implementation of social-emotional learning frameworks.

Implications for Practice

As with any review of research, it is of importance for the consumer to seek greater understanding than that of which is at face-value. The lack of significance in the analysis of some of the research questions presented in this study is contradictory to the review of literature. Likewise, some findings of significance at first appear to be in opposition to the literature. A review of the findings of each of the research questions, along with both an understanding of the theoretical framework of social-emotional learning and established research, leads to a deeper understanding of the findings and allows for a clearer interpretation for practice.

As nonexperimental quantitative research does not establish causation, one cannot assume from the findings that the implementation or lack thereof of social-emotional learning

causes a specific TVAAS composite score or attendance percentage. Likewise, one cannot assume that the type of social-emotional learning program implemented causes these outcomes. It is important for practitioners to connect the outcomes of the research questions in order to see the influence of poverty classification on not only TVAAS composite and attendance, but on the implementation practices of social-emotional learning. This approach is very circular, omitting causation but realizing the connection between the prevalence of implementation in high poverty schools, and those schools' attendance percentages and TVAAS composite scores.

Of utmost importance for practice is retaining the idea that all students, regardless of economic status, have potential for academic growth. Many high poverty schools in Tennessee are using CASEL SELect programs as a means of supporting student growth, and likely as a mitigating resource for absenteeism. However, it does not appear that there are negative outcomes related to student growth or attendance directly due to the implementation of social-emotional learning; rather, those outcomes tend to be more associated with poverty classification. Thus, implementation of social-emotional learning may very well serve to support improved outcomes for students and the school.

Given the notion of both the implementation dip and the normalcy of resistance presented in discussion of Research Question 1, it is the responsibility of each educator to ensure purposeful action to promote programming, renew commitment, and deliver social-emotional learning with fidelity. In addition, it may be of benefit for educators to be assured of the common occurrences of both resistance and the implementation dip so that these matters can be more easily recognized and proactively addressed.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study was quantitative and nonexperimental, future research of a qualitative nature may provide a depth of perspective not contained within this research. Analysis of educator, student, community, and former student perspectives would be valuable in conceptualizing the impact and experience of social-emotional learning and its outcomes not evidenced by quantitative data. Additional future qualitative study may seek to include analyzing perceptions of barriers to implementation, bias related to social-emotional learning implementation, and implementation experience of students and educators.

Future quantitative experimental research could detail outcomes for students participating in social-emotional learning and those not participating. However, ethical concerns for student success is a likely barrier to this research given the evidence base surrounding success outcomes related to social-emotional learning involvement. The Tennessee Educator Survey, a publicly accessible document located at https://www.tn.gov/education/data/educator-survey.html, houses a tremendous amount of existing data for further quantitative study. Given the evidence of the reciprocal nature of school climate and social-emotional learning implementation as detailed by Trach et al. (2018), the survey's data on perceptions of climate for every school in Tennessee could be an asset in further analysis of relationships between climate and social-emotional learning implementation. Additional consideration for both qualitative and quantitative study could be the exploration of leadership styles and their influence on the change process of implementation (Fullan, 2001).

Specific extension of this study should also be considered. As related to Research Question 1, a larger sample of individual implementation years could yield understanding of the "sweet spot" for implementation as it relates to student growth. Similarly, up-to-date TVAAS

data would yield inclusion of schools that have implemented social-emotional learning programming for 1-3 years, allowing for a deeper understanding of the potential connection between duration of implementation and TVAAS composite. Further analysis of TVAAS composite, years of implementation, and type of program implemented (CASEL SELect or not) could couple Research Questions 1 and 2 in furthering understanding of the influence of those variables on one another.

As with any research work, the bias of the researcher as an individual parlays into the focus of recommendations for further study, as well as into the implications for practice. It remains the responsibility of the reader to develop context in framing both future research and implications for practice, with an understanding that personal bias and professional need lend aid in developing future goals and study.

Summary

This study explored the problems of the discrepancy between research-established benefits of social-emotional learning compared to actual implementation, as well as the perception of need for social-emotional learning programming to be evidence-based as compared to those programs actually in use. The purpose of this study was to explore possible linkage between the use and duration of implementation of social-emotional learning frameworks and multiple measures of student outcomes. Both the problems and purpose of the study were based on review of current research related to social-emotional learning and its implementation, including the influence of social-emotional learning on academic and non-academic measures.

The research questions of this study guided explorations of relationships between social-emotional learning implementation, its duration and type, and student academic growth, attendance measure, and school poverty classification. While not all analyses resulted in

significant differences, the discussion of themes generated by the research questions provides context for understanding the results, especially in connection to one another. Additionally, the implications for practice yields a framework for conceptualizing the results as they may be applied to the practice of education.

Outcomes of this study may allow educators to forecast when students could begin to experience academic growth based on the school's social-emotional learning implementation process, as well as when that growth may plateau. Given the prevalence of high poverty schools in the state of Tennessee, the research may be especially of value to those educators serving Title I schools. Of importance is the study's potential influence on administrators and decision-makers in conceptualizing the relationship between evidence-based social-emotional learning initiatives and multiple measures of school and student success including individual student academic growth, school composite ranking, and attendance. Future study of both qualitative and quantitative design may serve to deepen understanding of the impact of social-emotional learning on student outcomes and school health.

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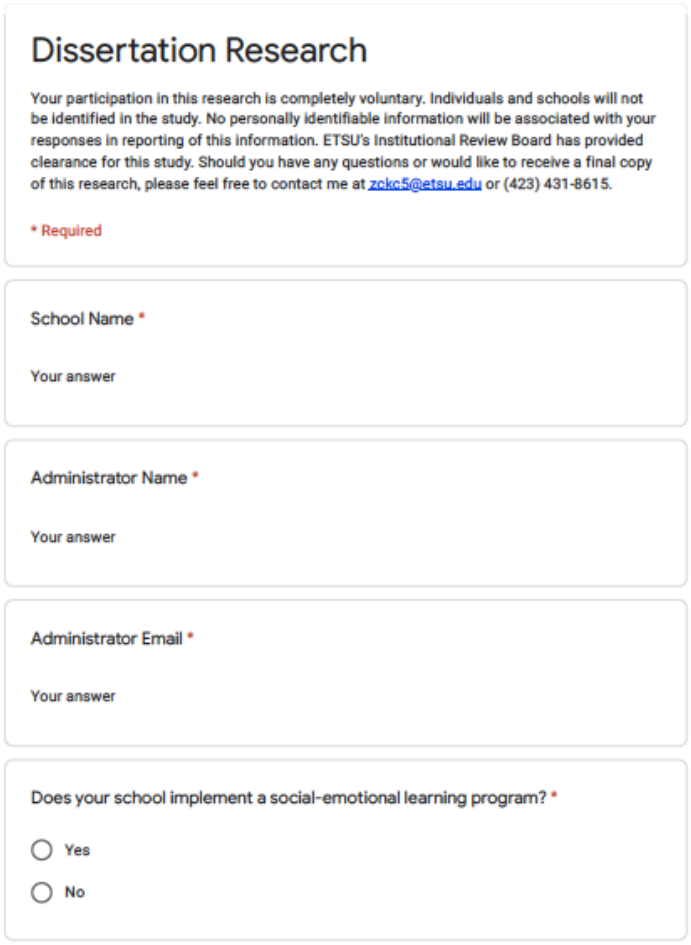
APPENDIX: Electronic Communication with School-Level Administrators

This appendix contains the electronic communication sent to building-level lead administrators of schools containing both grades 4 and 5 in the state of Tennessee.



Dissertation Research

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Individuals and schools will not be identified in the study. No personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses in reporting of this information. ETSU's Institutional Review Board has provided clearance for this study. Should you have any questions or would like to receive a final copy of this research, please feel free to contact me at zckc5@etsu.edu or (423) 431-8615.

* Required

School Name *

Your answer

Administrator Name *

Your answer

Administrator Email *

Your answer

Does your school implement a social-emotional learning program? *

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If your school implements a social-emotional learning program, is it a CASEL SELect program? A list of CASEL SELect programs can be found here: https://casel.org/guide/programs/ *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ My school does not implement a social-emotional learning progam.

What is the name of the social-emotional learning program your school implements? (Please enter n/a if your school does not implement a social-emotional learning program). *

Your answer

Including this school year, in what year of implementation is your school in terms of social-emotional learning program implementation? *

- ◯ 1-3 years (implementation beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, 2019-2020 school year, or 2020-2021 school year))
- ◯ 4 years (implementation beginning in the 2017-2018 school year)
- ◯ 5 years (implementation beginning in the 2016-2017 school year)
- ◯ 6 years (implementation beginning in the 2015-2016 school year)
- ◯ 7+ years (implementation beginning in the 2014-2015 school year or before)
- ◯ My school does not implement a social-emotional learning program.

Is your school a Title I school? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Submit

VITA

COLLEEN WEEMS

Education:	Ed.D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2021
	M.A. Counseling, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2005
	B.S. Applied Human Sciences, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2000
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Professional Experience:	School Counselor, Andrew Johnson Elementary School; Kingsport, Tennessee, 2014-present
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