Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
Travelling Fellowship

Investigating Happiness Lessons:
The Impact of Social and Emotional Learning in American and Swedish Schools

Dr Zoë Dunn

“Personally, I’m always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.”
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### Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship: Travel Itinerary

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>New York, New York</td>
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<td>Anchorage, Alaska</td>
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<td>Linda Lantieri at the Inner Resilience Programme</td>
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<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
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Executive Summary

Happiness lessons, discipline, hoodies, gangs, children's rights and responsibilities, league tables, a dumbing down of qualifications and university graduates unable to transfer their skills into the workplace. These are just some of the stories constantly debated and raised in the media regarding children, schooling, teaching and the education system in the U.K.

Debates around the state of the British education system, and social and emotional learning, (S.E.L.) have always been prolific in the press but have intensified in recent years. The media now frequently focuses on delinquent pupil behaviour, a lack of discipline and a system that does not seem to be bridging the divide between economics, attainment and opportunity.

It is now more accepted than ever that, in order for children to thrive and reach their potential, all their needs must be addressed: social, emotional and academic. In reality teachers are facing more pupils with increased social and emotional issues in classrooms. Pupils do not cut off their emotions at the school gates. Yet increasingly, teachers are faced with more demanding timetables, pressure for results and a narrowing of focus from the whole child and their developmental needs. Indeed this prompts a wider issue about what is valued in education and what is prioritised, topping national and international league tables or preparing children to successfully enter a globalised workplace.

This study is divided into two parts reflective of my travels. Part One is more theoretical and briefly addresses the arguments surrounding SEL; such as the developments in neurology, the definitions of happiness, the societal influences in Education and the changing nature of childhood.

The experiences afforded by my Fellowship enabled me to see best practice and to meet the pioneers and leaders in the field of SEL. Part Two is therefore based on my practical school visits and observations of SEL when travelling to different schools across America and Stockholm. I conclude that when SEL is valued and respected, given the appropriate time, resources and leadership, it can have a huge impact when embedded into a school community.

I hope this study offers an interesting glimpse into the breadth of research and debate SEL provokes and that it provides a springboard for anyone wishing to discover more about this valuable, controversial and emotive subject.
Part One

Introduction: “All learning has an emotional base.”

This project aims to address the role of social and emotional learning in education and the impact on pupils, by discussing the models of good practice in American and Swedish schools. The project is based on six weeks of travel to New York, Anchorage, Seattle, Chicago, Dallas and Stockholm as part of a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust travelling fellowship.

Part One reviews the theory behind social and emotional learning and the rationale for its implementation in schools. It will be argued that promoting social and emotional learning (SEL) can address some of the issues facing pupils today. Choosing a programme that is supported by empirical research can have direct impact on the learning, attainment and wider social issues affecting individual school communities. There are practical questions about the implementation of SEL to consider, and the argument for moving away from just focusing on cognition at the expense of metacognition; it is time to consider the links between IQ and EQ and the role our emotional and social development plays in learning success. Emotions are at the epicentre of all we do either from an egotistical or philanthropic standpoint. They ‘facilitate or impede children’s academic engagement, work ethic, commitment, and ultimate school success.’ At the heart of a child’s life is emotion; through relationships with others (families, peers, teachers) and in the context of how they fit into the world around them. It is therefore important that schools and families address emotional processes and how these affect children’s learning.

The Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, in his speech to The Policy Exchange on Free Schools, in June 2011, clearly outlined the declining position of British schools in international league tables: falling from 4th to 16th place in Science, 7th to 25th in Literacy and 8th to 28th in Mathematics. Whilst there are controversies surrounding countries in these league tables, like China, it can be useful to look at some of the better performing education systems in countries such as Finland, South Korea and Singapore, to chart patterns and assess trends. These global educational models, and their use in helping to develop and learn from best practice, will be further addressed in Part Two. It will also focus on the impact and criteria for success of specific SEL programmes using research from across the world. Theory and research are vital to drive debate and to raise standards within education, but they seldom replace the importance and usefulness of looking at implementation in practice. Finally Part Two documents the practical implementation of SEL, showing the reality of the impact for pupils in a small selection of American and Swedish schools.

The substantial body of research surrounding social and emotional intelligence and neuroscience, and the impact this has on child development and learning, has gained significant interest from academics, educators and the media. Research specifically

1 Plato
3 Michael Gove’s speech to The Policy Exchange on Free Schools, in June 2011 based on PISA’s results from 2006 and 2009, OECD (2010), PISA 2009 Results: Executive Summary
into social and emotional learning and the relationship to academic attainment has always been an intriguing one, which has continued to gain topical momentum in discussions surrounding the need for pedagogical change and educational evolution.\textsuperscript{4} SEL has had continual media interest prompting debates around teachers’ roles, the role of schools, parents and the community, all set against much broader philosophical, moral and social questions about the need to redefine the role of education provided in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

Despite the lack of a formally agreed definition for SEL - often quoted as social and emotional learning, competencies, skills or intelligence - there is a general agreement as to the importance of these skills. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), defines SEL as the process of acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to ‘develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness.’ Social and emotional learning is the capacity to recognise and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others. SEL also teaches the skills to develop care and concern for others, make responsible decisions and handle challenging situations constructively and ethically. These competencies are essential for all children to master and to utilise in adulthood, and in their lives, relationships and careers. SEL targets a combination of behaviours, cognitions, and emotions and can be further identified as a set of five competencies:

- Self awareness
- Social awareness
- Self management
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision making\textsuperscript{5}

There are some commentators who state that SEL and specific school programmes, (like the one in use in the UK, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, S.E.A.L.) make bold yet unsubstantial, unquantifiable claims relating to their impact on pupils. These views are refuted by advocates who use the example of a school community transformed by the implementation of SEL. It is clear that amidst these opposing viewpoints, the discussions, debates and opinions surrounding SEL in schools causes passionate debate.

Children, for various reasons, including different familial structures, multiple cultural influences, and socio-economic factors, are arriving at school with far more complex and wide ranging social and emotional needs than ever before. Teachers are responding to these needs in order to help pupils attain academically and to become successful members of society. Education has therefore become more holistic from necessity. Schools are educating their pupils in a way which not only takes account of the multiple intelligences and domains, but also identifies, values and understands the whole child and their often complex social environment. This is true whether or not they have adopted a discrete SEL programme. The recognition of the various but

\textsuperscript{4} Consult the bibliography for a sample of the main social and emotional academic articles and texts. Key academics in the field include: M.A. Brackett, M. Elias, D. Goleman, M.T.Greenberg, N. Humphrey, L. Lantieri, L. Salzberger-Wittenberg, K. Weare, R.A.Weissberg, J. E. Zins

\textsuperscript{5} www.casel.org/why-it-matters/what-is/sel/skills-competencies
interconnected needs of a child, the role a child’s social, emotional and physical needs play in their learning, is not now contentious.

The Children’s Act (2004), revised as part of a response to Lord Lamings’ inquiry and recommendations after the tragic death of Victoria Climbié, provided the framework for Every Child Matters (ECM) and firmly placed the focus on the whole child emphasising the need for multi-agency liaison. Yet the disbanding of ECM, along with the revised Ofsted framework, now places less emphasis on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Despite this schools will obviously still seek to develop the whole child irrespective of graded criteria, which lends weight to the argument that good schools naturally seek to foster SEL within their environment because it forms an intrinsic part of good practice.

Tom Roderick, the director of Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, suggests that SEL at its best ‘is a set of attitudes, practices, and policies fully integrated into the life and culture of the school.” Yet, interestingly, many commentators are cautious about the role of SEL in education, seeing it as a soft, touchy-feely curriculum, another burdensome intervention that is difficult to find time to address in an already over-stretched timetable. These critics see SEL as another initiative that ultimately does not address all the challenges facing U.K. schools; including effectively raising attainment. Yet despite these reservations, SEL was backed and funded by the Labour Government with a pilot programme in 2003. Ed Balls, the Secretary of State for Education in 2005, announced a commitment to social and emotional learning in primary schools after the launch of the primary S.E.A.L. programme, prompting fervent debate around the role, purpose and value of SEL from all educational sectors. This endorsement was mirrored in the Independent sector when the Master of Wellington College, Dr Seldon, famously pioneered wellbeing classes, often dubbed ‘happiness lessons,’ in 2006. Seldon strongly advocates learning based upon eight aptitudes, placing much emphasis on wellbeing at the centre, seeing it as complimenting, not detracting, from academic accomplishment.

Since Gardner’s often quoted work on the theory of multiple intelligences, which first mooted the model of differentiated intelligences in 1983, there has been growing educational debate around the domains of intelligence, the stages of child development and the impact for teaching and learning. The multi-disciplinary research gained from psychoanalysis, neuroscience and psychology, has further developed understanding about the roles of social and emotional intelligence and learning, which has directly shaped some educational practices around the world today. Yet the educational paradigm has shifted since the 1980s and 1990s when the

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6 Since 2010 the Coalition Government has archived ECM.
7 Roderick, T., (2009) Educating the Heart as well as the Mind: A Comprehensive School-Improvement Model Based on Social and Emotional Learning Roadmap and Toolkit, Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility p10 and p86.
9 Howard Gardner, (1983) Frames of Mind. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. The 8 intelligences are cited as: spatial, linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic.
body of this research first occurred, and an increasing number of school leaders and teachers are acknowledging the implications of neuroscience and psychological studies on developing a successful teaching and learning experience. Yet despite this knowledge, it is interesting to note that out of the original eight intelligences outlined by Gardner, the U.K. education system still tends to be dominated by two: linguistic intelligence and logical-mathematic intelligence.

The definition of emotional intelligence is based on the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions: to think and reflect. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, whilst others claim it is a characteristic we are born with. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer’s infamous article, Emotional Intelligence, 1990, identified four further models of emotional intelligence: perceiving emotions, reasoning with emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions. Emotional Intelligence has led to a better understanding of how SEL can be taught in schools. It was Daniel Goleman’s book Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ, five years later, that popularised the idea of emotional intelligence transforming the research into this area in business and education. One of the key themes Goleman addressed was that IQ is only a minor predictor of success in life, while emotional and social skills are far better predictors of success and wellbeing. He used the example of business and the role of leaders, arguing that there is a given threshold of expected academic achievement to become a leader but ‘emotional intelligence is the sine qua non of leadership.’ Without emotional intellect, ‘a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won’t make a great leader.’

This is one of many rationales behind the importance SEL has in building successful schools; pupils are more likely to succeed once their social, emotional and physical needs are met. SEL can increase pupils’ capacity to learn, affecting their academic attainment and their ability to be socially, emotionally, physically and mentally able to fully participate in society: to be successful adults. SEL seeks to develop skills pupils can apply in life in order to help them to manage their emotions, to be more resilient, and to make good choices. CASEL states that SEL promotes: ‘academic success, health, and well-being at the same time that it prevents a variety of problems such as alcohol and drug use, violence, truancy, and bullying.’ In addition scientific research has determined that effective SEL in schools significantly improves pupils’ social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, and social interactions, as well as reducing the levels of ‘emotional distress and conduct problems.’

It would be unusual to find any adult that would not want these skills and outcomes for the children in their care. However, some argue that the elements of SEL, the skills and competencies of social and emotional development, are already being taught in many schools across the UK (and indeed the world) and are therefore not new. Professor Katherine Weare adds weight to this argument, stating that teaching

10 Salovey, P., & Mayer, J.D., Emotional Intelligence, in the journal Imagination, Cognition, and Personality, 1990, 9, Baywood Publishing pp185-211
13 www.casel.org/why-it-matters/benefits-of-sel
how to manage ones' feelings is an age-old activity that schools have been involved with for many years in one form of another. Weare, who advised the government in the development of S.E.A.L., highlights that science has formalised this under the title social and emotional intelligence.\(^\text{14}\)

In practice most teachers have been utilising social and emotional competencies when teaching children yet the emphasis has shifted away from prioritising SEL within education. In order to achieve academically children must at first be motivated to learn, able to understand risks and opportunities, and see beyond themselves to appreciate the concerns of others. Elias et al argue that this aim can be achieved through ‘thoughtful, sustained, and systematic attention to children’s social and emotional learning.’\(^\text{15}\) Weissberg adds weight to this argument, claiming that SEL manages to give children a bigger picture, making them open up to new ideas and making them aware of how to respond to different situations, allowing time to reflect which is vital for learning.\(^\text{16}\) Weissberg and Elias et al all advocate that now is not the time to question whether schools should be attending to SEL, but rather, how. If SEL is to have a bigger impact than currently in the UK teachers and leaders need support to choose and select the right programmes and they need to monitor and evaluate the progress of SEL:

“Addressing these issues will increase the likelihood that more evidence-based programs will be effectively implemented and sustained in more schools, which, in turn, will support the healthy academic, social, and emotional development of more children.”\(^\text{17}\)

\textit{“If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands”: The Misconceptions Surrounding ‘Happiness Lessons.’}

The arguments around teaching SEL in schools have been well documented and are frequently also referred to in terms of wellbeing, mindfulness and ‘happiness lessons.’ However, wellbeing or social and emotional learning is not, as is often portrayed, about didactically instructing pupils in how to be happy. It is therefore useful to briefly address the numerous debates surrounding the concept of happiness in order to identify some of the complexities and misconceptions in relation to SEL and pupil wellbeing.

The dictionary definition of happiness is ‘a state of well-being and contentment or a pleasurable or satisfying experience.’ There is a clear differential here between a hedonistic form of pleasure, instantly self-gratifying, from external influences, to an internalised view, more value-based and attributed to a state. Happiness is


\(^\text{16}\) Abrams, F., \textit{Analysis Testing the Emotions}, Radio 4, March 7th 2011

commercial and something everyone wants to chase; from Professor Seligman’s happiness formula and BBC programme, to the plethora of available self help and advice books, websites, conferences and courses all marketing steps to the pursuit of happiness. If one looks at the origins of the word happiness, as Tal Ben-Shahar does in Happier?, one learns that it derives from the Icelandic, ‘happ,’ meaning chance or luck. This is interestingly the same source as haphazard or happenstance and infers that happiness is connected to an element of chance. This view is in conflict with Aristotle’s description of a quest-like journey of enlightenment: ‘happiness is the meaning and the pursuit of life, the whole aim and the end of human existence.’ Whether one adopts this classical viewpoint, or looks more towards Eastern, Buddhist influence, there are copious hypotheses surrounding the concept and approach to achieve of happiness.

Ian Morris, in his inspiring and practical book, Teaching Happiness and Well-being in Schools: Learning to Ride Elephants, argues that it is a mistake to encourage young people to follow the generic opinions of happiness. He notes that some commentators think that happiness is a right to be achieved if certain conditions are met (I will be happy when) or that happiness results from a presence or absence of things (such as money and poverty). Morris, who developed the wellbeing curriculum at Wellington College, argues that happiness is not conditional and is often confused with the pursuit of pleasure: “Happiness, in its proper sense, has nothing to do with pleasure and instead has everything to do with character development and consistent, mindful attention to who we are and to our relationship to the world.” Morris adds that therefore ‘happiness lessons’ or well-being should be seen in terms of flourishing; enabling pupils to flourish across all aspects of their lives.

In addressing the misconceptions surrounding the ‘teaching of happiness’, it seems relevant to think more closely about how happiness is presented to children. Adam Philips argues that the prominent attention given to being happy, often a ‘demand’ of adults for their children, is unrealistic and instead a ‘right to frustration’ is more important than seeing happiness in terms of a ‘calculated end’ or a right: “Happiness and the right to pursue it are sometimes wildly unrealistic as ideals; and because wildly unrealistic, unconsciously self-destructive.” Wanting children to be happy is often an adult projection and the experience is often more of an instantaneous pleasure than a continual state. As with any emotion, it is likely that happiness will also lead to other feelings, like disappointment and frustration. Therefore in this vein, the pursuit of happiness, Philips concludes, may be best seen as ‘the right not to feel frustrated.”

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20 Aristotle
24 Ibid., p9
Indeed Philips highlights that not everyone finds happiness in the same things or experiences. In *Over the Moon: Adam Philips on the Happiness Myth*, he argues that one person’s pursuit of happiness could lead to another’s upset, or even result in harming or hurting another, thus making happiness as a social or communal pursuit rather complex. He adds that some people ‘enjoy’ or prefer to be unhappy.\(^{25}\) Lord Layton, often dubbed the ‘Happiness czar,’ can be seen to concur: ‘The pursuit of personal success relative to others cannot create a happy society since one person’s success necessarily involves another’s failure.’\(^{26}\)

These various interpretations of happiness serve to uncover the misconceptions associated with well-being and SEL, often linked to the phrase, ‘teaching happiness.’ It is not the goal of education, nor those advocating SEL, to i ‘teach’ pupils to be happy. Instead the role of education lies more in preparing and equipping children with knowledge and skills in all forms (social, emotional, academic, physical, logical,) in order to be active and successful in their futures. It is therefore more useful, in terms of the impact of social and emotional learning on pupils, to think of developing resilience and character rather than the misleading ideal of ‘teaching happiness.’ If more emphasis were placed on teaching social and emotional competencies within children they would build their resilience and understanding of how to recognise, interpret and manage emotions. This would enable children to learn how to deal with the inevitable successes and failures of life in a healthy way; to enable them to fully flourish. SEL programmes, embedded across the curriculum, are one way to address this as a core competency helping children to ultimately lead successful and contented lives.

The discussion around happiness, wellbeing and mindfulness, is useful in the context of SEL as it evokes passionate responses from people who question if it is a school’s place to address social and emotional competencies. Dr Suissa at the Institute of Education purports the view that there is no one size fits all model for SEL and that schools need a more individual approach to enable pupils to understand the messiness and complexity of human lives in order to understand their own emotions. Suissa claims that the ‘search for an overarching principle of happiness, delivered through homilies ("conflictual relationships should be avoided"), is the stuff of oppressive dictatorships.’\(^{27}\) Many would agree that schools are not places where homilies should be delivered and that packaged programmes can often become general and irrelevant to individual pupils’ needs. This is why evidence based SEL programmes, lead by school leaders who know the needs of the pupils and their school, are recommended. These programmes are one part of implementing SEL in a school community and seek not to preach a set of views, but rather to develop skills within pupils to think critically for themselves, make good choices and be resilient socially and emotionally.

Critics of SEL state that one of the reasons schools are failing children academically is because of ‘soft’ initiatives like SEL and that time would be better spent on developing academics. All these views abound in the media fuelling many fallacies. It

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is a known fact that discipline and behavioural issues in schools in the UK have affected teaching and learning. Children, just like adults, come to school with emotional baggage and their relationships, inside and outside of school, dominate. Social and emotional issues are therefore not separate from a child’s academic and school life but an intrinsic part of it. They are essential if schools are to meet the educational aims of fulfilling children’s potential and developing skills for life and learning. Yet it seems that these ideals have become somewhat lost, as the education system does not manage to meet the needs of a changing age, or engage its pupils. Ken Robinson, a proponent of a more creative educational model, argued that the reason so many people are opting out of education is because “it does not feed their spirit, it doesn’t feed their energy or their passion.”

These are arguments echoed in Schools with Spirit, where Linda Lantieri calls for more ‘soulful places of learning,’ where pupils’ inner lives become more present in the classroom. The various contributors to Lantieri’s book highlight the need for pupils to be able to bring themselves into the classroom, in terms of being ‘present,’ or as Parker J. Palmer expresses it; ‘to live divided no more.’ Lantieri et al have a clear message that nurturing children’s spiritual lives is not about morality, religious or cultural beliefs, but instead about ‘belonging and connectedness, meaning and purpose.’ (Indeed any reference to spirituality is prohibited in American schools due to the 5th Amendment). Lantieri’s work with schools in Lower Manhattan post 9/11 used these principles and the inner resilience programme to help support traumatised pupils and teachers. Building Emotional Intelligence tells the powerful story of how Lantieri worked with staff, students and families to rebuild their lives:

“Having been in Manhattan on that day and being among those who came to support the teachers and children of Ground Zero, I had some profound realizations. I became more deeply aware that the real tests of life can come a child’s way at any moment, and that we as adults can not protect children from circumstances beyond our control. The question instead has become how to equip children with the inner strength they need to meet both the intense challenges and the great opportunities that come their way.”

The inner resilience programme, founded by Lantieri, builds these skills in children through a curriculum and can be infused into school communities. The main aim of the programme is to: ‘cultivate the inner lives of student, teacher and schools by integrating social and emotional learning with contemplative practice.’ Teaching resilience is one of the bedrocks of SEL, used in successful programmes like Resolving Conflict Creatively Programme (RCCP) and uses evidence based research to support its claims, such as Seligman’s, Penn Resiliency Program, that aims to

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30 Ibid p1
31 Lantieri, L. (2008) Building Emotional Intelligence Techniques to Cultivate Inner Strength in Children, Sounds True, Inc. Boulders p6-7 and Chapter 8 for more on RCCP.
32 www.innerresilience-tidescenter.org/index.html
combat depression in children. Seligman, who developed the concept of positive psychology, advocates the teaching of SEL as necessary for these three central reasons: “as an antidote to depression, as a vehicle for increasing life satisfaction, and as an aid to better learning and more creative thinking.”

It has been argued that the use of the phrase ‘happiness lessons’ is unhelpful when discussing the teaching of social and emotional skills as not only is it often an unobtainable concept but it can lead to confusion about the main purpose and impact of SEL. It is therefore more useful to consider the benefits of SEL and why more emphasis on SEL is required in the UK and the reasons for its resurgence in some schools across the world.

**Hitting the Headlines: Hooligans and Hoodies**

The news is full of headlines depicting children and teenagers as antisocial, materialistic, violent and immoral, exacerbated by vocabulary like ‘yob,’ ‘thugs’ and ‘feral.’ This repeated portrayal led to David Cameron’s speech in 2006, where the misattributed phrase, ‘hug a hoodie’, derived. Cameron’s speech attempted to decriminalise the hoodie, and by association, teenagers, showing it as an item of clothing adopted by children to blend with their peers and avoid unwanted encounters on their streets. Despite the media sensationalism the reality is that children can be aggressive and display antisocial behaviour and this is no different from previous generations. Yet, it is a fact that children today are dealing with more complex social and emotional issues. For many children role models are missing in families and in communities. There is a decline in what some term ‘social and moral’ parenting from families, and wider family role models and support. Children are grappling with the effects of higher levels of divorce, domestic violence and parental stress as well as the impact of redundancy, unemployment and often generations living from state support and benefits, with little incentive or opportunity to break the cycle. There is a concerning increase in adult and child mental health problems, cited as one in ten children, and there has been a 65% increase in self-harm disclosures and a doubling of 15 year olds with behavioural problems in schools over the last 25 years alone.

Children in the UK are growing up in a technologically advanced, multimedia and global environment, constantly stimulated and often living within the values of more than one, at times, conflicting culture. The government’s recent report, *Letting Children be Children*, gives valuable insight into influential factors affecting children’s

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33 The Penn Resiliency Program has had remarkable results in helping children to avoid depression. After 2 year learning the PRP skills, 2000 students had half the rates of moderate to severe symptoms of depression compared with the control group. [www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/prpsum.htm](http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/prpsum.htm)


lives today and acknowledges that 9 out of 10 parents are concerned that their children are pressured (commercially and sexually) to grow up too quickly. The report highlights further work commissioned by the government documenting the commercialisation of childhood (Buckingham 2009); sexualisation of young people (Papadopoulos 2010); and issues around internet safety (Bryon 2008, 2010), which all highlight the reality of the media world children now inhabit. The internet is an invaluable part of progress, constantly developing, but is not without negative impact. Social networking can enhance children’s exposure to cyber bullying, as high as one in four, as well as increased sexual imagery and content. Targeted, manipulative advertising that fuels materialism and the desire for celebrity and fame is the ‘wallpaper of children’s lives,’ and saturates the content of magazines, television, music, the internet and film. Interestingly Morris notes that the average person in the UK spends a staggering 7 hours and 9 minutes per day on communication devices and an additional 2.5 hours at the nation’s number one activity: watching TV and listening to music. It is now rare not to own a mobile multi-use phone where all forms of media are accessible in seconds. In fact 90% of all 11 year olds own a phone, often a smart phone, where they have uncensored access to an often unexplained world.

Today’s generation of ‘digital natives’ need to be able to compete against a global workforce where many jobs and roles have not even been conceived. Technological advances will continue to increase adding to the need for educators to prepare pupils to be able to compete successfully in multiple jobs or careers. It is evident that children’s lifestyles have changed dramatically in the last 10 years. Nick Baylis, who taught positive psychology and well-being at Cambridge University, argues that this is not always a bad thing, and there are certainly improvements to children’s lives over the last fifty years. Yet he agrees that it is harder to see dramatic rises, if any, over the last ten. Daniel Goleman observes that on average children are growing up “more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, more impulsive and aggressive.” The increase in referrals to mental health specialists, school counsellors and psychologists, highlights this paradigm of a deepening dissatisfaction or ability to process the more complex lives children are now leading. The nihilism felt by many in society has been related to the rise of materialism, where the accumulation of material wealth leads to an ‘emotional bankruptcy’. An increase in the number of children with depression and mental

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39 Morris, p172 and p174
40 One in eight internet users aged 5-7 (12 per cent) mostly use the internet on their own, rising to three in ten aged 8-11 (29 per cent) and over half of those aged 12-15 (56 per cent). Layard, R., & Dunn, J., (2009) A Good Childhood Report, Searching for Values in a Competitive Age, Penguin Books, p1 also consult Bailey, R.,p36.
42 Daniel Goleman, Working with Emotional Intelligence, p11
health issues, added to the higher level of social deprivation, and the stress of modern media, has resulted, to use Goleman’s phrase, in an ‘age of melancholy.’ Add to this a severe global recession affecting cuts to public funding, like after school support programmes, and it becomes understandable that schools do not feel inclined to adopt initiatives, like SEL. These trends were internationally recognised when the UK was ranked 20th in terms of child wellbeing by UNICEF’s Overview of Child Well-being in Rich Countries, just piping the USA for the bottom spot.44 These statistics are a reality for children and affect their emotional and social development impacting their lives at home and at school. They therefore need to be addressed and understood by educators if we are to collectively have a greater impact on the learning experiences of children.

There is one generalised view that contemporary childhood is synonymous with growing up too quickly, lacking social skills or moral guidance, and that children demand rights without accepting responsibility. These stereotypes of a moral and social malaise were at a height when riots broke out across the UK in May 2011, exposing the argument that the youth of Britain were suffering a decline in moral health. The recently published report into the riots emphasises the need to develop social and economic resilience in communities and calls upon schools to deliver programmes, akin to those in America, which build and strengthen individual character in order to, “help children build resilience and self-confidence as part of normal school life.” The Riots Communities and Victims Panel further advocates that parents and schools should ensure that all children develop “the values, skills and character to make the right choices at crucial moments.” The panel endorses raising the profile of social and emotional skills within schools:

“We propose that there should be a new requirement for schools to develop and publish their policies on building character. This would raise the profile of this issue and ensure that schools engage in a review of their approaches to nurturing character attributes among their pupils. We also recommend that Ofsted undertake a thematic review of character building in schools. To inform interventions tailored to individual pupils’ needs the Panel recommends primary and secondary schools should undertake regular assessments of pupils’ strength of character.”45

Despite the fact that the riots were not, as commonly believed, all carried out by ‘feral teenagers,’ the report recommends that young people need help to become ‘more responsible, ambitious, determined and conscientious members of their community.’46 These are the exact skills embedded in social and emotional learning programmes advocated by many pedagogical experts and academics.47

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45 After the riots: The final report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel, Executive Summary, The Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2012, p3
46 Ibid., p28
Neurological developments in the understanding of how different areas of the brain link to social and emotional intelligence and learning have increased understanding in this field in recent years. The knowledge of how the brain works effectively is essential for teachers as it unlocks the key to certain basic behaviour and builds understanding of how children best learn. Knowing the links between our emotions, the responses in our body, and the optimum environment for learning therefore helps inform pedagogy and good practice. Goleman’s significant work in this area highlights valuable links between how the brain works and the impact of emotion on cognition. Goleman cites the work of Reuven Bar-On and Antonio Damasio, whose neuropsychology study is ‘convincing proof that emotional intelligence resides in brain areas distinct from those for IQ.’

Since 1970 and the idea of the ‘triune’ brain, it has been widely accepted that evolution was significant when seeing the brain in three parts: the reptilian brain, the mammalian emotional brain and the human neocortex. Since then developments in neurology have led to further knowledge about the brain and emotion. Goleman uses modern developments in neuroscience to argue that the once thought creative left and right divisions of the brain are out-dated, and that there is more up and down across the sides. He clearly describes areas of the brain related to emotional thinking; the prefrontal cortex, and terms the amygdala a ‘radar for threats’. He sees these areas as the ‘good boss’ and the ‘bad boss’ respectively, in terms of self-regulation of emotion. There are many factors that make the amygdala, (the bad boss), hijack the prefrontal cortex, resulting in unregulated emotions or poor decision making. If children are able to understand the physiology of emotional responses they have more chance of regulating them.

In The Brain and Emotional Intelligence: New Insights, Goleman further describes the social brain’s use of ‘mirror neurons’ as representative of a ‘neural wifi’ to connect to another brain, when certain behaviours are contagious, like laughter. Understanding more about the different areas of the brain teaches us that emotions are linked intrinsically and physically to learning. Professor Davidson’s work on the emotional brain and implications of neuroplasticity is crucial for further understanding this connection. Davidson’s recently published book, The Emotional Life of your Brain, identifies a new model of the emotional brain with six basic emotional styles, linked to brain systems that include: resilience, outlook, sensitivity to context, social intuition, self-awareness and attention. Within these areas there are key personal differences between individuals that help to explain emotional responses and conditions like depression and autism. In his presentation The Heart-Brain

48 Aristotle
49 Reuven Bar-On and Antonio Damasio, University of Iowa medical school, identified the brain areas associated with specific behaviors and mental functions using lesion studies and discovered connection between areas of the brain and the social and emotional intelligence. See Goleman, D (2011) The Brain and Emotional Intelligence, More Than Sound LLC.
Connection, The Neuroscience of Social, Emotion and Academic Learning, Davidson convincingly highlights how cognitive behavioural interventions are biological and how SEL can therefore change brain function and brain structure: “We can change the brain by training the mind.” Davidson’s endorsement of SEL reveals interesting things for learning. If children can learn to utilise their prefrontal cortex more, other than relying on responses from the amygdala, (the area often associated with the reptilian response of fight or flight) they become more effective emotion regulators. Through applying social and emotional competencies, stress and anxiety levels, as well as the level of cortisone hormone, can be reduced. This is useful for pupils because by learning skills to calm themselves and reduce anxiety (i.e. threats in the environment) they can show improved cognition that can lead to enhanced performance generally, and specifically, i.e. for testing and examinations.  

Further research is being undertaken into the connections of the regions of the brain effective for emotion, which will no doubt yield fascinating results. Yet what is now clear is that understanding the plasticity of the brain is crucial when assessing the impact of SEL, as it highlights that the brain is built to change in response to experience. The prefrontal cortex of the brain is fundamental to understanding that negative emotion affects cognition. Davidson argues that SEL lays the foundations for future learning, emotion regulation and social functioning and further supports the argument for developing SEL within education:

“Social and emotional learning is an empirically verified strategy to improve the skills of emotion regulation and social adaptation. As such, social and emotional learning likely produces beneficial brain changes.”

There is much evidence coming through from a neuroscience perspective to support the importance of healthy attachment and early interventions where the attachment patterns are distorted or have become derailed. John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth’s well known attachment theory, based on the ‘strange situation’ experiment, led to three categories of attachment being identified between care-giver and child: secure, avoidant and resistant attachment. It is known that this level of attachment affects children in later life. It is well documented that parents who encourage and enable environments where children’s brains can function at their best, do so by offering safe, secure and nurturing care, where children have strategies for dealing with emotion. There is additional research that proves that environmental factors shape the brain and that early emotional life is central in shaping the circuits of the brain. Children’s brains are constantly being moulded by external influences; both good and bad. Therefore the need to promote positive changes through SEL is essential. The systems that manage emotions are not present at birth, and the prefrontal cortex, vital for emotional development, is undeveloped. During the ‘primal period’ of

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53 Ibid.
babyhood the early experiences of the relationship between parent and child influence the biochemistry of the brain and establish a framework for emotional life. This occurs in the first two years of life. These neural pathways turn the repeated experience into learning. Biological responses to emotions are influenced by social factors, and so if the framework is secure, there is a psychological and physiological capacity to emotionally face challenges meaning you are more likely to be mentally healthy as an adult. Investment in early parenting and responsive care, Gerhardt argues, is vital for developing secure attachments and emotions, and ‘will provide children with the optimal start for being emotionally equipped to deal with life.’

Recent knowledge about neuroplasticity has implications for teaching and has been utilised in the business world to assess and recruit top performers and leaders. It tells us that previously thought-of character traits, such as calmness, patience, cooperation and kindness should now be seen as skills that can be trained and learnt. Further implications from neurology abound around imaginative thought and creativity. The first happens between 5-7 years old, where the prefrontal cortex takes a strong hold and emotions are more controlled and imagination can be more coordinated, known as the ‘five to seven shift’. The second is at puberty, where imagination decreases slightly as neurons are lost due to ‘sculpting.’ Goleman, in setting out this argument, highlights that emotional intelligence abilities are present early in life and at these stages naturally, but by employing SEL programmes, that use these crucial stages of brain development as a basis for their ‘developmentally appropriate’ lessons, children can learn to master these crucial life skills, to become the top performers of the future.

One of the main criticisms of SEL programmes has been the lack of evidence linking social and emotional learning to academic attainment. The recent meta-analyses of 213 programmes, conducted by Roger Weissberg and Joseph Durlak, however, clearly highlights the direct impact of SEL on academic achievement: “...students receiving school-based SEL scored 11 percentile points higher on academic achievement tests than their peers who did not receive SEL.” As the most scientifically rigorous review to date, it covers programmes delivered from the ages of 5 and 18. The review set out to see what SEL programmes achieved, which ones worked and their impact in terms of results. Durlak and Weissberg concluded that SEL programmes produced ‘multiple positive outcomes’ such as reducing negative behaviour and poor conduct, promoting self-esteem and emotional awareness and understanding, and that they were indeed some of the best ‘strategies for fostering students’ development in multiple areas.’ Critics argue further that these statistics are unreliable due to the fact that academic tutoring was also given to some pupils in

57 Ibid., p217
60 Goleman, D., (2011) The Brain and Emotional Intelligence, More Than Sound LLC.
this category and other influential factors. However, even if the link to academic success is not convincing for some, Durlak and Weissberg also point to multiple benefits of SEL programmes as among the most successful of all school-based universal interventions being:

“…effective in both school and after-school settings and for students with and without behavioural and emotional problems.
- Are effective for racially and ethnically diverse students from urban, rural, and suburban settings across the K-12 grade range.
- Improve students’ social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, connection to school, and positive social behavior; and reduce conduct problems and emotional distress.
- Improve students’ achievement test scores by 11 percentile points.
- In addition, school-based programs are most effectively conducted by school staff (e.g., teachers, student support staff) indicating that they can be incorporated into routine educational practice.
- Effective programs and approaches are typically sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (S.A.F.E.), meaning they:

S: use a Sequenced set of activities to achieve skill objectives
A: use Active forms of learning
F: include at least one program component Focused on developing personal or social skills
E: Explicitly target particular personal or social skills for development.”

SEL should be taught in the same manner as other subjects and academic skills; through modelling, practice and application, engaging pupils in positive and stimulating activities in and out of the classroom. Teaching SEL does not solve all the issues facing education, or indeed society, and as Tom Roderick rightly cautions we must be careful not to see ‘SEL as a panacea’ of societal ills. Yet teaching social and emotional competencies does gives pupils the ability to learn to be resilient, amongst other skills, and to respond to the rapidly advancing society they are living in, as a means to becoming ‘masters of change’ in their communities.

SEL has been seen as a soft curriculum and useful only for ‘problem’ schools or disadvantaged or disengaged pupils. Some commentators dismiss social and emotional learning claiming that schools are not the venue for emotional education, and that an over emphasis on emotions could lead to an emotion obsessed society.

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64 Roderick, T., (2009) Educating the Heart as well as the Mind: A Comprehensive School-Improvement Model Based on Social and Emotional Learning Roadmap and Toolkit, Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, p10
There is a contradiction in asking teachers to accommodate an ethos empowering the teacher as a creative and free practitioner with the demands of the present testing and examination system. This strengthens the sense of concern amongst some in the teaching profession that by delivering SEL teachers are being used in the role of counsellors or psychologists. It is a real concern of adults and teachers that they will be used in this role, where they could indeed cause more damage than good. Insufficient training for social and emotional competencies leads to a lack of confidence and understanding about how to deliver SEL coupled with a valid concern that there is not enough time to implement SEL when the timetable is already full. Who can blame some educators for seeing SEL as just another initiative to fit into the school day? However, those committed to teaching SEL say it is not ‘one more thing’ they have to do but a ‘better way of doing what we already do.’

Instead it frees teachers up to teach the curriculum, to see results and to enjoy the relationships they can build with their pupils.

Despite these concerns, it has been seen that from a scientific, psychological, social and practical perspective, emotions do play a vital role within learning in schools. Judy Dunn argues that excessive individualism has lead to a culture that is fuelled by selfish desires with the increase in ‘family breakups, teenage unkindness, unprincipled advertising, too much competition, and of course, our acceptance of income inequality.’ Working collaboratively in school, as part of SEL competencies, could certainly help to counter balance more individualist tendencies driven by increased media influence and consumerism.

So what does this all mean for schools? There is the obvious accountability of schools to raise academic attainment as one agent in the process of social and economic mobility. Yet, as has been seen, there is also a need for schools to nurture children’s characters so they make good choices, reducing negative decision-making that often leads to anti-social behaviour, and in some cases the tragic death of young people. Schools in the UK have been addressing some of these areas through the P.S.H.E. curriculum, with 90% of Primary Schools adopting S.E.A.L. to focus on issues of social and emotional learning. Despite many success stories, it will be argued that SEL has not been valued or given the time needed to properly embed into UK school cultures and has therefore had varying success. S.E.A.L., like other SEL curricular programmes, forms one part of successful implementation of social and emotional competencies and skills. Part Two will address the success criteria and look a little closer at SEL programmes and the wider understanding of the need for a whole school approach.

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Part Two

The UK: S.E.A.L. Panacea or Placebo?

The UK government responded to the body of research and evidence into the impact of social and emotional learning through commissioning a report in 2003 into how children's emotional and social competence and wellbeing could be developed and implemented into schools effectively. The recommendations in Katherine Weare and Gay Gray's report, What Works in Developing Children's Emotional and Social Competence and Wellbeing?, identified the need for an holistic view and an explicit teaching and learning programme, along with an emphasis on teachers' competence and well-being, and involvement of the whole school community. Ten years on, it could be argued that SEL has not been significantly promoted with enough funding or appropriate staff training, to enable it to gain credibility. In response to the initial report, S.E.A.L. was developed, as a nationwide programme, as part of the Behaviour and Attendance Pilot in 2003 and then adopted by Primary Schools in 2005 and by Secondary Schools in 2007. The Department for Education and Skills defined S.E.A.L. as a “comprehensive, whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that are thought to underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, and emotional well-being.” Today, according to the Department for Education, 90% of Primary Schools and 70% of Secondary Schools use S.E.A.L.

There have been numerous reports into the effectiveness of S.E.A.L (Humphreys 2008, Hallam 2009, Humphrey et al 2010) and none completely endorse an overriding academic impact. Humphreys notes that there is significant statistical evidence that primary S.E.A.L. small group work has had a positive impact. Hallam’s research also supports a positive impact on pupil behaviour, understanding, well-being and emotional needs, yet there is more caution about the impact on academic attainment. Hallam highlights some of the difficulties of implementation:

“The commitment of the senior management team was crucial in determining the effectiveness with which the programme was implemented. This included allowing sufficient time for staff training and planning, enabling staff to develop understanding of children’s social and emotional development, valuing teaching of the programme, and facilitating the integration of the materials into schemes of work for Personal, Social and Health Education in the long term. There were few practical barriers to the implementation of the SEAL programme—the potential difficulty was staff reluctance and anxiety in dealing with sensitive issues, such as bereavement.”

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The evidence for Secondary School implementation is less positive, showing a lack of convincing evidence to support the claims of S.E.A.L. Prof Humphrey at Manchester University conducted two studies over three years and concluded that S.E.A.L. had no measurable impact on children’s outcomes. Most of the findings into the effectiveness of S.E.A.L. have limitations, as it is difficult to quantifiably assess the impact of social and emotional skills that may be affected by other school variables. This is especially true when SEL skills are not assessed against measurable criteria before and after a course has been implemented.

It can be argued that teachers and schools in the UK have been using SEL programmes for many years under different models and it is true that much of the criteria for successful schools match the aims of SEL programmes. However before the implementation of S.E.A.L. the approach was inconsistent and there was a lack of status for social and emotional competencies in schools in the form of PSHE. Yet in some schools S.E.A.L. has not worked sufficiently in its current form. This is not necessarily due to deficiencies within the programme but often with its implementation. This leads to the question of whether the government rushed the development of a nationwide programme, and if this one programme was intended without modification, for all schools in the UK. If one looks at the S.E.A.L. guidance in 2005 it does highlight specifically what is needed for successful implementation cautioning against just adopting the lessons without proper implementation. Clouder, in a report for Fundación Marcelino Botín, agrees that a national approach may not always be the best form of implementation:

“From the outset it was not intended that SEAL would be a centrally imposed programme but rather that it would provide a framework and guidance to support schools to develop pupils’ social and emotional skills within each school’s unique circumstances.”

However, S.E.A.L. was often taught as a framework and an ‘add on’ to an already busy curriculum. The problems with S.E.A.L. are often quoted as a lack of clear objectives and no measurable evaluative data to support or show pupil development. Steve Baker’s recent article in the TES, Seal may be down but it’s not dead yet, highlights that S.E.A.L. is working in many schools but that it is often not given the time or attention it deserves, especially in secondary schools. Baker offers ten tips for successful implementation, which include the need for S.E.A.L. to be embedded into the school and led by senior leaders. These mirror the recommendations of CASEL and indeed are set out in the framework.

The Radio 4 programme Analysis, presented by Fran Abrams, outlined a commonly voiced criticism of S.E.A.L. lessons as being a little too ‘touchy feely’ and that teaching pupils to think about their emotions could lead to a more ‘introspective therapy driven culture.’ Abrams argues that it all seems a little too much like a “Tesco Training school” for pupils building compliance more than the development of independent thought. Whilst this is one view of the delivery of SEL, and can be

70 Baker, S., ‘Seal may be down but it’s not dead yet,’ TES, April 6th 2012 p8-9
71 Fran Abrams, Prof Humphreys and Judith Suissa
contrasted to the outstanding staff in the UK teaching many engaging and successful S.E.A.L. lessons, this criticism has some grounding in fact. The realities of the implementation of S.E.A.L. for primary schools is that PSHE is often the lesson that gets cancelled or postponed within busy school timetables, and so is often not consistently taught or pupil driven. It can be reactive; an anti-bullying lesson is taught in response to situations in the class. This of course is extremely useful, but if there were proactive measures in place, like the programmes in America, children would have more skills and models to independently put into practice. For any SEL programme to be beneficial, clear aims and objectives are required, that are monitored and sustained; something identified as lacking in S.E.A.L. (Humphreys) Sue Bingham argues that S.E.A.L. is not only ‘overly-controlling,’ but could potentially be counter-productive.72

It has been seen that the implementation of SEL is frequently inconsistent within a school between phases or transitions and therefore the impact is often less significant. It is acknowledged that a systematic, year-by-year, long-term approach to SEL is required to ensure pupils are equipped with the necessary tools and skills at developmentally appropriate stages. In the current educational climate of empirical data and test driven results judgements, this is a lot to ask of schools; especially when some argue that the data supporting a direct academic link is not conclusive. Nonetheless, those schools that invest time in SEL programmes attest to the impact to their pupils, often academic, but more often in terms of well being, self esteem and behaviour.

Clouder stated in 2008 that 'time will tell' about the impact of S.E.A.L.73 There are convincing arguments that the current model has not produced all that was expected of it when it was first implemented. More funding would be needed to train teachers to really infuse S.E.A.L. into the curriculum to suit individual school needs. This is supported by the fact the current government, instead of continuing to fund the Secondary S.E.A.L. programme, have instead asked Headteachers to implement their own provision of Personal Social and Health Education lesson. Whilst this philosophy is to be applauded, the inconsistency within this approach could be concerning. The evidence from research into the implementation of SEL programmes in America, argues that in order for success, SEL needs the support of school districts and indeed federal endorsement backed by evidence based research. Therefore in order for schools to commit to SEL successfully, it needs to be valued and respected across all educational departments. This appreciation of the need to develop the whole child exists in the theory of UK educational provision. Whether S.E.A.L. or other programmes are adopted, it is essential that careful consideration is given to the nature of the programme and its implementation so that it meets the needs of the pupils in each school to ensure SEL has the greatest impact.

Social and Emotional Learning: A Global Perspective

SEL has been making headlines across the globe as many countries are re-evaluating their educational provision and adopting programmes of social and emotional learning. The Fundación Marcelino Botín Reports of 2008 and 2011 both assess how different countries are addressing SEL, across different cultures. (Singapore, Israel, Australia, Finland and South Korea, to name but a few.) Countries around the world, often with high academic attainment are looking to adopt SEL programmes that they can adapt to suit the varying cultural and social needs of the students. Singapore’s education system is renowned for producing highly proficient graduates in maths and science, yet despite this ‘success’ they responded to the feedback of the business marketplace to develop more creative graduates who were better at problem solving. They worked with Professor Weissberg at CASEL to build and implement an SEL curriculum to suit the needs of their schools and students.74 Singapore’s core mantra, ‘Teach less, Learn more,’ is based on skills that mirror social and emotional competencies.

Australia is also committed to ensuring a better transition for young people into the workplace and a focus on building skills that increase employability.75 The Young Foundation seek to redress the inequality in the experience of transitions to the workplace, often seen in young adults from low social economic background, rural areas and the indigenous population. Schools in South Australia have worked with American programmes but there are also many Australian SEL programmes being developed and implemented.76 The Young Foundation created S.E.E.D., which aims to develop resilience and build character through working on ‘discipline, the ability to interact with adults, to take feedback, to deal with setbacks and more.’ The acronym stands for:

- S for social and emotional competencies
- E for enterprise, creativity and innovation
- E for emotional resilience
- D for discipline77

Finland has attracted a huge amount of attention from educationalists around the globe over the last decade, mainly due to its rise to the top of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which charts the comparative standardised attainment in reading, maths and science of 15 year olds in over 70 countries/economies. Koenken identifies the mitigating factors often cited for this academic success, and focuses on the philosophical basis of equity and equality in the

74 www.moe.gov.sg/education/programmes/social-emotional-learning
75 Kahn, L., McNeil, B., Patrick, R., Sellick, V., Thompson, K. & Walsh, L., (2012) Developing skills for life and work Accelerating social and emotional learning across South Australia Accelerating social and emotional learning across South Australia, A Young Foundation report with The Australian Centre for Social Innovation and the Foundation for Young Australians, p7
77 Kahn, L. et al, p5
fully inclusive, integrated and heterogeneous system. However, the Finnish model pays a high price for this success with poor levels of mental health and one of the highest suicide rates in the world; contributing to the leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds. In order to combat these issues, SEL has been integrated into the curriculum through the Core Curriculum for Pre-School Education 2010, using many American initiatives, working with CASEL and SEL programmes, such as the Association of Finnish Lions Clubs, based on the Lions Quest and the Committee for Children’s The Second Step. Finland has placed emphasis on building early years provision, (which has no assessment criteria), promoting collaborative learning and implementing a Finnish anti-bullying programme, ‘Kiusaamista vastaan’ or KiVa. The aim being to ‘enhance the social and emotional well-being of school-aged children in a more contextual and holistic way, that is, involving the whole school, families, and the wider community.’

America is dominant in the field of SEL research and programme provision. However this is changing as more pedagogical value is being placed on the importance of SEL by education systems across the world. CASEL currently works with countries and schools to implement SEL programmes based on evidence and research to suit the specific needs of different cultures. SEL standards have been selected in some states of America, such as Illinois and endorsed by school districts, like Anchorage, where SEL is firmly embedded into the ethos of elementary schools and their curricula. There are active efforts in other states (e.g., Texas and New York) to establish and implement SEL in learning standards. Yet Illinois was the first state to require every school district to develop a plan for the implementation of SEL programming in their schools. This is increasingly the case in America, where a vision of schooling embracing SEL competencies is being supported at local and federal level.

In contrast to America, Sweden does not implement specific SEL programmes but instead has SEL embedded into the fabric of the school experience culture and curriculum. The Swedish Education Act (2010) stipulates that all children and young people must have access to education of equal value, irrespective of gender, place of residence and social and financial circumstances. The basis of the recently revised Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the leisure-time centre 2011, is based on a democratic philosophy which values many social and emotional competencies, such as promoting empathy, respect, self awareness and personal responsibility: "The school should stimulate each pupil towards self-development and personal growth. It should focus not only on intellectual but also practical, sensual and aesthetic aspects. Health and lifestyle issues should also receive attention."

In Sweden compulsory schooling (grundskola) is mandatory from age 7-16. The aim of compulsory education is to provide an equal standard for all pupils, working with parents, to promote pupils’ ‘harmonious development into responsible human beings

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79 Ibid., p117-118
80 www.sbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm
81 Skolverek, Curriculum for the Compulsory School, preschool class and the leisure-time centre 2011, National Agency for Education Skolverek, p9-10
82 www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/8009
and members of the community.”

Equality and individuality are emphasised in Swedish schools and there are a range of options to suit individual needs and ages. Children mainly attend a local municipal school but they have the right to choose to attend an independent or privately run school, if it is approved by the National Agency for Education. Everyone can access independent schools because the municipality is responsible to fund a school place based on the parents’ choice of school. This Swedish policy for free parental choice in 1992 aimed at creating social equity to increase inequality, yet it does not seem to have developed the social mobility expected as many from lower socio-economic areas have not utilised this option.

Some pedagogical experts in the UK desire to replicate the Scandinavia model. Sweden, and more recently, Finland, have gained considerable attention for their emphasis upon a more socially and emotionally based curriculum ensuring a holistic view of intelligence and building resilience as a core competency. Most SEL in Swedish schools, and to an extent in Finnish schools, is not delivered through an external programme but instead it is infused throughout the school as part of the statutory education curriculum. In 2010 in the UK’s attention was given to the introduction of the Swedish-style Kunskapskolan schools when the Learning Schools Trust sponsored Hampton Community College in Richmond to become Hampton Academy. After this two further schools followed; Twickenham Academy and Ipswich Academy, all governed by the Learning Schools Trust. Indeed some argue that UK Free Schools are based on the Swedish model of a more holistic, choice driven philosophy.

A Social and Emotional Training programme (SET) was trialled in Sweden from 1999-2002 in a number of schools in Botkyrka Municipality, Stockholm. The programme was designed by Kimber and implemented by teachers and so data was variable. It was found to have some positive ‘small-to-medium effects’ on aspects of mental health and health related behaviours, which was regarded as positive. Despite the study being inconclusive in attributing results directly to SET, Kimber et al recognise: “What works in the USA may not necessarily work in Europe, although what is effective in Sweden may not be so in other European countries.”

This is important to remember, as SEL should be differentiated to the needs of the school and its pupils. No one SEL programme or model can suit the various cultural, social and emotional needs of children in different regions or countries across the world. However, it is clear that education systems internationally concur that they must attempt to try and meet these needs in children through the education provide today in order to shape the economic and social outcomes of tomorrow.

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83 www.skolnet.skolverket.se/polopoly/utbsys-eng
84 Conversation with Ruhi Tyson, Wardolf Steiner School, Stockholm. This model of parental freedom of choice is seen by some to have come from Sweden, in the form of British Free Schools.
As with many developments in education, a look towards the USA can be very fruitful because SEL has been a focus of research here for over 30 years. CASEL was co-founded by Daniel Goleman at the Yale Child Studies Center, (now at the University of Chicago, Illinois) and is still the main resource for educators and academics around the world. The USA is where the majority of programmes and research into SEL originates. There are numerous SEL programmes on the market today, mostly originating from America, but they are steadily growing in number and being developed by countries across the globe. Some are naturally more effective than others.  

One of the challenges of implementing SEL in classrooms is the selection of quality resources. It is often the case that teachers pull together various materials to teach SEL, instead of using one main programme, and this can lead to a loss of a ‘logical flow of content.’ The benefit of packaged programmes is that they target specific skills and goals, such as problem solving, empathy, stress management etc. Merrell argues that whilst packaged curricula are a good way of teaching SEL concepts, they should ‘complement, supplement, and enhance existing school programming,’ and that the overall vision of the programme should be strategically planned and sustained over time. He adds that to impact on students social and emotional functioning in the long term, programmes need to be ‘infused across the duration of students’ educational tenure.’ As will be seen many of the schools visited implemented SEL programmes over a long period and this had significant impact on the school communities.

Implementation of SEL: Learning Lessons from Best Practice in America and Sweden

Since the publication of Promoting social and emotional learning: Guidelines for educators a comprehensive text of SEL programmes, CASEL published Safe and Sound in 2003 which rated and graded SEL programmes using the five competencies. This initial review included 88 programmes, but in a measure designed to further raise the standard of programmes, this is expected to be reduced to about 25 from over 250 available programmes. The reviewed Safe and Sound is intended to be a first guide for educators who wish to select the right programme for their schools. The best SEL programmes use S.A.F.E: Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit. The revised CASEL guidance, due in Autumn 2012, should be invaluable in helping schools navigate selecting an SEL programme for their school.

Once a programme is chosen it is vital that time is dedicated to embedding it within a school. Since 2005 there has been significant research into how to successfully implement and sustain an SEL programme. CASEL identified ten key indicators for

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87For an overview of SEL programmes please consult the appendix and CASEL Safe and Sound and Revised edition in 2012.


89Ibid., p30

successful implementation of school-wide SEL. These steps are summarised in CASEL’s Sustainable Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Implementation Guide and Toolkit, the steps are:

1. Principal commits to school-wide SEL
2. Engage stakeholders and form steering committee
3. Develop and articulate shared vision
4. Conduct needs and resources assessment
5. Develop action plan
6. Select evidence-based program
7. Conduct initial staff development
8. Launch SEL instruction in classrooms
9. Expand instruction and integrate SEL school-wide
10. Continue cycle of implementing and improving

CASEL further recommends the integration of SEL skills with the wider curriculum, and also through pedagogy as part of wider school practices. This last aspect is often the hardest to measure and develop as it often depends upon individual personality and vision. Nonetheless, it is essential. The relationships between student and staff, student and peer, and between staff, are vital to embed an SEL culture in school. A more consistent approach within a school community is needed for there to be a lasting impact so that the benefits of SEL programmes can be effective. It is a long-term commitment to ensuring that pupils become resilient; can problem solve, think about what choices they make, control and understand their emotions, and build character and resilience. For schools to implement SEL effectively there are some essential yet practical components to consider. Morningside Centre for Teaching Social Responsibility recommends nine steps, which are similar to those of CASEL’s above:

1. Regular instruction to develop students’ social and emotional skills
2. An approach to discipline and behaviour management aligned with SEL
3. Effective SEL interventions with students who need extra help
4. A safe, orderly, respectful environment throughout the school day
5. A personal friendly respectful learning community
6. Leadership opportunities for students
7. SEL integrated throughout the curriculum
8. SEL activities that inform, educate and engage parents
9. Professional development to support staff in implementing SEL

The strong pattern emerging from research based recommendations, like CASEL and Morningside Centre, is that once SEL is valued, and a strong and strategic vision is in place, SEL programmes can be infused into the ethos of a school successfully. It has been seen that SEL programmes can not be all things to all schools, but selected

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91 www.casel.org/about_casel/toolkit2.php. CASELs rubric for implementation of SEL
www.casel.org/downloads/rubric.pdf
92 Roderick, T., (2009) Educating the Heart as well as the Mind: A Comprehensive School-Improvement Model Based on Social and Emotional Learning Roadmap and Toolkit, Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, p11
evidenced based programmes that target areas of school improvement can promote a culture within schools that embraces SEL concepts.

Over the duration of the fellowship I visited many schools and was fortunate to meet some of the leading academics and pioneers in the field of social and emotional learning. In the schools seen best practice incorporated many, if not all of, the steps above and there was little doubt that SEL principles were having a positive impact on schools and their communities. Strong leadership, community involvement, collaborative learning, and a long-term approach and commitment to embedding SEL into the school culture, were commonly observed themes. It is useful to use these considerations in relation to the practical examples observed in the schools visited during the Fellowship.

**The Long Term Commitment: Embedding SEL into the School**

Covey, in *The Leader in Me: How Schools and Parents Around the World are Inspiring Greatness, One Child at a Time*, states that one can experience a school that has fully embraced SEL by simply walking through its corridors. In this respect the ideology behind a socially and emotionally intelligent learning environment is often intangible, as it is ingrained in the curriculum but also in the daily routines of the school, from the moment you are greeted at the door. This was the case in Public School 24: Magnet School (P.S. 24) in Brooklyn, New York. It was opened in 1997 as a dual language school in the diverse neighbourhood of Sunset Park where the majority of pupils are Hispanic and have free school meals. The school embraces SEL on many levels and works closely with Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility. This partnership has grown into a comprehensive, school-wide initiative that fosters students' social and emotional learning and reduces behavioural problems.

The approach to SEL is comprehensive: Children’s misbehaviour is met with the assumption that it presents a learning opportunity for the child. Staff members are role models and get children to problem-solve immediately to engage in self-reflection that gives them insight and perspective into their own motivations, triggers, and the impact of their behaviour on others. Understanding emotions and how to manage them is crucial. There is always a full conversation with a child who “misbehaves” so the child understands the conditions of the situation. Pupils reflect and write down what happened, what role they played, and what they think they could have done differently. They draw from a toolbox of options for managing their anger, such as breathing deeply, counting backwards from ten to zero, and learning how to be assertive instead of aggressive. Whilst being good practice this is not uncommon in many schools. Yet it is P.S. 24’s peer mediation programme, spanning pre-kindergarten to fifth grade, that is exceptional. It emphasises pupil leadership through using peace helpers and peace mediators to encourage a safe school environment. Children instruct other children through peace mediation steps and peace corners in the classroom. Often peace mediators or peace helpers were previously disruptive pupils who have benefited from the training and are now role models for their peers.

P.S. 24 teaches pupils to identify and manage their emotions and to practice through implementing the strategies of “Peace Education.” In addition pupils have social skills
training and learn effective communication and conflict resolution skills, through a classroom curriculum called the 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect, & Resolution, Morningside Center for Social Responsibility). The Habits of Mind is also infused into the ethos of the school and the curriculum. The school is notably peaceful and friendly and there is respect between how adults and children interact with each other. The first warm welcome from the security guard is deliberate. Art and murals are prominent and highlight themes from the local community and heighten the aesthetic nature of the building. (This is a theme mirrored in Anchorage, where art and the school building is a valued and fundamental part of the school environment). Displays around the school predominately focus on the area of SEL work covered and related themes. Classrooms have visual reminders of how to resolve a conflict and about a focal point and area.

The school also places a prominent focus on developing cultural awareness through student-led Diversity Panel discussions. In one of these panels, peace mediators and peace helpers, aged 7-11, talked about personal experiences of being treated differently because of their race or religion. One young Muslim talked about being told to leave a shop in Manhattan because they did not serve "his kind." Pupils responded to this incident with great empathy having fully grasped the reality of racism, its personal impact, and their role and responsibility as the ones to address it. Further layers of interventions include lunchtime small group clubs and a free after school club, PAZ, where pupils learn to resolve conflict and anger management strategies; as well as a guidance counsellor and mediation coach. This work is not done in isolation and collaborating with families and community service organizations to support social-emotional learning is also a key strength of P.S. 24. There is a parent room in the centre of the school and a parent liaison teacher that supports education in the community as well as making a link between the school, parents and the local area.

The long-term commitment to SEL in P.S.24 is replicated on a larger scale across Anchorage School District, Alaska. ASD validates the importance of SEL through having social and emotional standards as part of the taught curriculum. SEL was adopted by Anchorage School District Education Department in the 1980s when they began their twenty-year relationship with Linda Lantieri. Since then it has been a model for SEL best practice in other states and across the world. The Social and Emotional Learning Standards and Benchmarks for the Anchorage School District were devised in 2004 and are evident in the philosophy as well as the curriculum of the sixty plus elementary schools that make up the district. The key matrix is: Knowledgeable, Capable, Caring, Responsible. (I am, I can, I care, I will). The investment in social and emotional learning is paying off both socially and academically. Alaska ranks second in the United States in terms of its percentage of residents who claimed two or more ethnicities as their demographic category. With over 90 languages spoken in the state and a wide spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds, the school district is diverse and wide ranging in intake. However, it is noticeable that all elementary schools have access to the same technology (iMacs and Macbooks) and they are all required to spend 1% of their total school budget on art, where an artist in residence builds an art project specifically with the school,

93 www.asdk12.org/depts/SEL/media/SEL_Standards.pdf
94 www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states, statistics from the US Census Bureau.
enhancing the aesthetic feel of the school building. The equity and investment in buildings and technology reinforces a clear message of being valued to all pupils.

Williwaw School, Anchorage, is a beacon of how SEL has been infused into the fabric of the school. The lessons observed were all part of a wider programme based on the Connected and Respected programme (RCCP) and imaginary toolkits aimed at helping students to develop responsibility and to resolve conflicts peacefully. Different themes are adopted in addition, for example, Dr Becky Bailey’s S.T.A.R. (stop, take a moment and rest) or McCall’s Can you Fill a Bucket? These themes ensure a fresh approach and focus to the programme that is taught weekly and infused throughout the curriculum. Positive goals and matrixes are displayed and discussed in classrooms, yet most noticeably it is the school’s vision that is constantly modelled and given prominence in every class and throughout the school in every sense: Be safe, Be respectful, Be a peaceful problem solver.

The Principal uses her live school T.V. slot each morning to model SEL capabilities and the language of SEL is in evidence around the school in the form of posters and positive displays and with exchanges between staff and students. (“My job is to keep you safe and yours is to make the right choices,” “We are all calm and ready to learn.” “Please show me what good listening looks like”). Pupils are welcoming to visitors and exhibit confidence and appropriately greetings. The school Principal is a strong proponent of SEL and dedicates a monthly staff meeting dedicated to the needs of the pupils and themes to be taught across the school. Staff must submit a class behaviour matrix at the start of each year, agreed on by the students in that class, which is used by all staff when addressing conflicts within that class and often used with parents and the Principal. One member of staff was trained by Linda Lantieri and continues to embed SEL in her classroom decades later, now also modelling lessons for colleagues within the school. The Principal values staff training and yet also identifies the need for sustainability, ensuring that SEL is given a high profile within the school and revised often; claiming that this is essential to its overall success and impact.

In the classroom there are significant uses of language that embed SEL principles at Williwaw. The school has a diverse multicultural intake and this was evident in the lesson that was observed where a high percentage of pupils were EAL. Therefore the use of language and vocabulary was very specific. There were also numerous visual aids and reminders of the steps for individual matrixes. Class tables are teams; each person with a different responsibility to ensure the table works collaboratively or independently. There is a regular ‘family meeting’ and a peace workshop instead of class council or circle time. The use of anti-bullying language is evident and frequently called upon – the target, the bully, the ally, the bystander - and this is used when discussing conflicts. Identifying and understanding that conflicts will arise is a taught skill; pupils know that some are small and they practice being able to diffuse and managed them, yet they are also aware that some conflicts are more complex and require adult intervention.

The school counsellor uses data collected from various routes; school office referrals, behaviour charts referred by teachers and student self-assessed behaviour charts. Analysis of this data reflects the tone of the SEL programme delivered by the teachers, so that it is more specifically targeted to the needs of the pupils at that
time, whether this is in response to issues that arise, or as a means to prevent
behaviour or prepare pupils.

In total contrast, Vittra is a group of seven Independent schools in Stockholm,
found in 1993, and based on the principal of individual learning with personalised
action plans for each child. Vittra Lidingö’s school mission statement highlights this:

“Vittra Lidingö is a school where you get to be who you are. You feel
respected and appreciated for your unique qualities and talents. You are an
integral part of a warm community and develop together with other people
of different ages.”

Vittra claim that their approach to education is flexible and linked to current
educational research and changing social demands on the skills of a future society.
“Through collaboration with researchers, universities and industry, we are convinced
that the national curriculum largely lacks the perspective needed for schools to keep
pace with the rest of societies development.” Therefore the school has adopted
the EU’s eight key competencies for lifelong learning in order to reflect current
educational research and social changes and to keep pace with the rest of social
development. The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

1) Communication in the mother tongue;
2) Communication in foreign languages;
3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
4) Digital competence;
5) Learning to learn;
6) Social and civic competences;
7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
8) Cultural awareness and expression.

Since August 2010 there is also a "one-to-one" policy from grades 4 and up so each
child has a laptop where the majority of their work is carried out. The school has
collaborated with Professor Thomas Kroksmark, at the School of Education and
Communication in Jönköping to develop its approach to modern technology. In
terms of SEL, the school philosophy at Vittra Lidingö, links to the overall National
Curriculum guidelines, mirroring many social and emotional aims. There is no one
programme used by the school but instead SEL is infused into daily teaching, learning
and procedures and ethos.

In the first four to six weeks of term, all pupils have a ‘training camp,’ where they
establish the learning and behaviour rules for the year and discuss consequences and
focus together on developing the culture they want for the year. Children are put
into responsibility groups and meet daily over the year for a morning assembly to
discuss issues related to children’s rights, equality, friendships and relationships with
adults, as well as any social issues affecting individuals, such as conflicts, and wider
events in their lives and in the news/media.

95 www.vittra.se/english/AboutVittra/Onecomputerperstudent.aspx
96 The Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework, consult www.europa.eu
There is a sense of collaborative learning but also an emphasis on independence, where children are given the freedom to choose where and how to work. Children work according to ability and not age and can therefore be in mixed age groupings. There is an emphasis on peer modelling and pupils are often used as examples and role models. There is an active school council. In addition to whole class teaching, pupils spend the majority of time working on individual tasks or projects and in this manner are therefore responsible for their learning. Every Friday students reflect on the week and evaluate their feelings /mood and that of the group.

Teachers work in teams and collaboratively and have a shared responsibility for pupils. They support and monitor each other in an open environment. This is reflected physically with the school building, which is light, open and connected to the outside environment, with wood furniture, floor to ceiling glass, and an absence of bright, coloured display boards. There is a school wood and areas of the classrooms have dedicated sofa areas for pupils to relax, work or to commune for their daily morning meetings.

The Swedish school system recognises the essential importance of pre-schooling, which should “encourage and strengthen the child’s sympathy and empathy for the situations of others. Pre-school activities should be characterised by care of the individual’s well-being and development.” The majority of 6-year-olds in Sweden are enrolled in pre-school classes. This commitment to early social and emotional competencies is a strong feature of the school.

The alternative or fully holistic view that adopts the central importance of social and emotional learning can be seen in the Steiner Waldorf School model. Indeed, important to the Steiner model is the sense that vocational training should run alongside academic. Having a curriculum anchored in practical reality, creating primary experiences for pupils, develops independence, resilience and confidence. Steiner Waldorf schools were pioneered by the Austrian philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner, and are firmly rooted in seeing the needs of the whole child.

Kristofferschool, Stockholm, is firmly rooted on the understanding of the relevance of the different phases of child development and therefore children formally start school at around seven when they are mentally ready to think independently. “In the early ages Waldorf teaching is focused on feeling, will and imagination. The purely mental, cognitive or intellectual aspects of learning are not particularly stressed. All instruction is therefore presented artistically through storytelling, play and imaginative pictures.” Social and emotional competencies are delivered throughout the curriculum but with a particular emphasis on the teacher’s role to develop the child’s soul and spirit, which underpins the commitment to each pupil; a teacher-pupil relationship built over eight years.

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97 Curriculum for the pre-school Lpfö 98, AB Danagårds grafi ska, Ödeshög, 2006, p3
99 www.steinerwaldorf.org
Steiner schools aim to provide an ‘unhurried and creative learning environment where children can find the joy in learning and experience the richness of childhood rather than early specialisation or academic hot-housing.’ The curriculum focuses on the whole child.

“It gives equal attention to the physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural and spiritual needs of each pupil and is designed to work in harmony with the different phases of the child's development...Social and emotional skills are fostered in a variety of ways: by the recognition of childhood as a time of wonder, by the family-like environment of the extended Early Years, by the provision of clear adult authority and guidance and by the exploration of global and social perspectives at secondary level.” 101

There are many studies into the success of the model around the world. The Department for Education and Skills commissioned a report into Steiner school education in 2005 with the intention of investigating the similarities and differences between the two systems.102 Yet this model still seems to be less widely accepted over more mainstream schooling that focuses on academic attainment with SEL as an additional focus.

What is common to all Swedish schools is the fact that SEL is an essential part of the curriculum. There has been a recent attempt in America to establish SEL benchmarks for all schools, with increasing success. In Illinois, the state legislature approved a measure to make SEL competencies part of the state’s learning standards. The Skills for Life programme, funded by a grant from the US Department of Education, caused much publicity in Ohio. Congressman Tim Ryan, of Ohio’s 17th Congressional District, sponsored this approach to district-wide SEL implementation.103 This meant all schools had to “develop and implement a plan to incorporate social and emotional development standards as part of the Illinois Learning Standards.”104 The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) delivered ten SEL standards that support three overarching goals that students must achieve by the end of high school. To develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success; to use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships; and to demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviours in personal, school, and community contexts.105 In addition to goals, standards, and benchmarks, the ISBE website includes performance descriptors for each standard with grade levels and over 600 descriptors in all. These descriptors provide educators with examples of very specific learning outcomes that teachers can use in developing lessons aligned with specific standards at specific grade levels.106 Focused learning objectives and success criteria show that

101 www.steinerwaldorf.org
103 The model is based on RCCP. Linda Lantieri worked with Senator …. to develop this programme, see video example
104 www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm
106 www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/descriptors.htm.
SEL can be taught and measured, which should lead to stronger evidence of its impact on pupil attainment and learning.

**The School Community**

Community is a dominant theme in schools that embrace SEL and this was most evident at Chugach Optional Elementary School, Anchorage, where parents are inherently part of the school in a way that makes them intrinsic to the curriculum. Chugach Optional is a unique school that embraces parental involvement and partnership. It was founded by a group of parents in 1973 with the principle of being a strong community school with multi-age groupings and flexible learning situations. This original philosophy has extended so that the school today is open to parents who are part of the educational team and work in the school to provide a wide array of personal, individualised experiences for the children. Parents can stay in the classroom or school all day. They contribute in three main ways: classroom help (assisting with small groups, going on trips, helping students produce work), at home tasks (admin, gathering materials for class projects) and community tasks (planning events and co-ordinating volunteers, teaching a special interest mini course). Whilst this model highlights how parent participation can impact hugely to make a harmonious learning environment between home and school, it is not a model that all school communities could practically implement. Parents need to commit to 36 hours of volunteer time and an additional 10 hours for siblings at the school. There is no barrier to parents coming into every classroom in essence means that, as the Principal noted, it is ‘teaching in a fish bowl.’ However, the teachers are far from threatened by this and indeed embrace the philosophy of parental involvement.

SEL skills are heavily embedded into the life of the school. Self directed learning is at the core along with collaborative work and is based on ‘mutual respect between the teacher and the child.’ Classes are called ‘family groups’ and social responsibility is clear. Whilst the teacher has the responsibility for making decisions and setting boundaries between what is acceptable in the room, the children are involved in their daily learning and teaching. Parents also know how to support pupils as the school teaches them, and there are lots of different instructional hints and reminders are class parent boards. Learning at Chugach Optional is child directed and independent facilitated by the teacher and intrinsically linked to their environment. The school is purpose built and has been designed specifically to foster independence. Classrooms are one level and open and pupils can move from their class space into the large open corridors, which are used as teaching areas, independently. Pupils have freedom to go to the library, situated with spectacularly beautiful views across the mountain range, to research or work collaboratively in a safe and secure environment, linked to the teaching areas. This model works in a small environment and may not in a larger one, but the premise is on building respect between teacher and child so that the child takes ownership for how they work best. The principles of SEL are very much evident and are infused into the curriculum, ethos and culture of the school.

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107 Chugach Optional Handbook, p4
Baxter Elementary School is a learning community where staff have seen a direct link between the implementation of SEL and attainment in annual test scores. Whilst other factors can not be ruled out as influencing this increase in academic attainment, the Principal believes that the changes to the school have been as a direct result of SEL inclusive practice. The School has a positive discipline plan and a simple matrix: to be safe, to be responsible, to be respectful and to be positive. Every Monday is a dedicated focus for a new SEL theme and these themes are woven into the school week through teachable moments. The school is an incredibly warm and supportive environment that teaches children with a range of SEN needs using Multisensory Instruction. In addition to the class teacher using SEL standards daily, there is a health teacher who covers areas of this curriculum more commonly known in the UK as PSHCE. The school has the services of a counsellor and they have business partners from the local community, which support the school in numerous ways. All children are celebrated through SEL awards, which now have equal prestige as the academic awards.

There is a belief that the SEL message needs to be visual and therefore the SEL standards and benchmarks are evident explicitly in the school through display, utilising the four quadrants of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management. Family social events in the school are planned around these quadrants including the whole school community in the deliver of these key skills. All children are aware and know about these standards and benchmarks and this is a critical ingredient for them to develop. Assessment is therefore less subjective, due to teachers having clear goals and evidence of when a child has achieved an area. Changing an ethos in any school takes time, and implementing an SEL model was not a quick fix; it required a long-term vision. Nonetheless the results of SEL for pupils are beneficial at Baxter and translate to higher achievement and to well rounded and successful elementary graduates.

**Leadership**

The impact of effective school leadership has been well documented so it is not surprising that leadership of SEL is an essential criterion for successful implementation. Tom Roderick’s research has shown that a key indictor for the success of school improvement rests with school leadership, often the Headteacher, promoting trust in the school community. Training of heads and teachers is therefore essential to the work of Morningside Center who are now working on a pilot programming, SMART, to support school leaders to develop SEL within their schools using the comprehensive Roadmap Toolkit. Principals and Headteachers need to be socially and emotionally literate and model the practices they wish to see in their school. All adults need to mirror the SEL skills for them to be effective.

Elementary principals in Anchorage are all required to have SEL training from district level to embed SEL into their schools. Leaders meet monthly to talk about SEL practices and peer mentoring. Adults need to mirror SEL skills for them to be effective.

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effective. Anchorage District has specific funding for staff and leadership training and places importance on this area of school improvement and development. Kincaid Elementary School is an example of how very strong leadership can infuse SEL into the school ethos. It also serves to show that a school with a high academic and affluent socio-economic intake can also value and benefit from SEL. There is strong parent support for the school and the PTA won the Anchorage Education Association’s PTA of the year award in April 2012, highlighting their commitment to the school. The Principal’s warm and caring nature and passion for SEL is evident throughout the school. This dynamic leader reflects a strong sense of belonging to all. The use of coyote as the pet-name and mascot for the pupils creates a unity in the school. The clear message that being kind can make yourself and others happy is very prevalent, and pupils and staff are ‘bucket fillers’, writing and reading out positive praise statements about their peers, which they can take home to share.

(This is an activity based on Carol McCloud’s children’s book Have you Filled a Bucket Today?). Appreciative notes and displays are liberally scattered around the school along with key behaviour matrices, based on SEL competencies, used as reminders for pupils. A welcome and opening reception office, and a very charismatic leader, models the ethos and approach of SEL practice from the moment a visitor, parent or student, enters the school. This is the essence of their mission statement: Kincaid Coyote’s are respectful, responsible, safe and kind leaders. This behaviour is modelled by every adult in the school community and is evident to every visitor to the school.

As with any organisational change, leaders have to commit to SEL and see the longer-term goal. They often have to work against negative attitudes to SEL and change teachers’ perspectives or attitude. Once it has been running within a school the benefits are obvious and previous opposition can turn into the strongest proponents. If teachers and school leaders are to recognise and value SEL, initial teacher training needs to include SEL instruction and teacher mentors to develop these skills in teachers for the future.

The issue of leadership and planning was recognised by Durlak et al as success criterion for SEL:

“Effective leadership and planning also promote quality program implementation through ensuring adequate financial, personnel, and administrative support as well as providing professional development and technical assistance (Devaney et al., 2006; Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003). Along with this effective planning and programming, there is a need to establish assessment and accountability systems for SEL programs in relation to student outcomes (Greenberg et al., 2003; Marzano, 2006). Addressing these issues will increase the likelihood that more evidence-based programs will be effectively implemented and sustained in more schools, which, in turn, will support the healthy academic, social, and emotional development of more children.”

In Sweden the most famous example of strong leadership and transformation change is the Rinkeby School. It is often cited by academics as an excellent model of for cultural integration and community outreach, where social and emotional learning, a

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holistic view, took the school from rock-bottom, in terms of reputation and attainment, to the top, where pupils gain the highest grade in maths in the whole of Sweden, (consecutively for the last eight years). In this sense, it is a model for schools around the world. The key to Rinkeby Skolan’s success is in a holistic approach to embedding SEL through visionary leadership, highly trained, dedicated staff and a strong aspiration for its pupils. It therefore serves to support the model success criterion identified by academic research for SEL.

As mentioned Rinkeby School is infamous internationally due to its transformation from ‘the worse to the best school.’ The pupils speak over 61 languages represented in 2010-11 and many more different cultures and nationalities are represented from Iraq, Somalia, Bangladesh and Turkey to name a few. Rinkeby School is often cited as an example of best practice when facing the challenges of integrating an immigrant population and preparing young people for the future. The Headmaster, Rektor, Börje Ehrstrand took up his position in 1992 and its his inspirational leadership that is credited for transforming the school. When he arrived the school was in a state of turmoil. A transient community where 30% of its residents moved in and out of Rinkeby on an annual basis, lead to a fractured school. It was on the brink of closure but today 97% of students graduate, with an unbeaten football team, compared to less than half in previous years. The school received the European prize for the best in prevention of crime in 1998. Ehrstrand believes that this transformation was due to engaging with parents. He called a meeting of parents and made them reclaim the school, taking responsibility they set about removing the prolific graffiti and vandalism. Parents and students sign a contract agreeing to the school rules and pupils are given a mentor, who is not just concerned with their academic achievement but also monitors their social development and health.

Collaboration with local business, social institutions, health providers and the police centralised the needs of the school and consequently the Headmaster centralised all resources from the school. This enabled him to provide social services, leisure and health stating that this would help give him the best for pupils: “We want our pupils to be winners on the future labour market.” He attributes the school’s success down to recruiting excellent teachers and giving pupils aspirations. This strong vision has a sound strategy where good examples and good opportunities are promoted. Nobel prize winners visit the school every year, and there are links with big businesses like Deutsche Bank, Toshiba are keen to work with the school.

The main focus of the school is on developing communication skills to prepare students for further study and careers. To achieve this there is a focus on language development and interdisciplinary work. There is a focus on communication in order to unite the diverse languages and cultures present in the school. Students learn to communicate in four languages, of which Swedish is compulsory. The library is central to the vision with a focus on reading lots of texts and an annual project based on prize winners, culminating in the annual visit.

Rinkeby School starts to build SEL competence by looking at commonalities that connects people. They refer to this as "the children of Abraham" because Abraham

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[110] Leadership-Social Entrepreneurs 2002 www.internationalforum.com/.../metaphores_for_leadership
is common to Muslims, Jews and Christians. Another emphasis is on ‘meaningful work after school hours,’ where a youth centre offers various sports activities as well as a music radio broadcasting/music mixing centre, and is open every day of the year until midnight. This including Christmas Day, when many of the Muslim students attend the centre. Recreation staff are central to the SEL ethos, providing support and role models for pupils to make good choices, eliminate bullying and racial discrimination. They are also integral to building pupils’ communication and social skills and encourage aspiration.

Rinkeby Akademien, started in 2008, offers students advanced lessons and mentoring. It builds on the philosophy of the school, aiming to reduce the distance between school and work, between students and workers or entrepreneurs. It is linked to many businesses and aims to prepare pupils for the workplace. The transformation of the school had much to do with the principles of SEL:

“The first is that the school has to be seen in relation to the community, as well as in the context of society at large, and even in an international context. The second is a holistic view of learning and children’s development from preschool onwards. The third is a holistic view of the individual child, including not only knowledge acquisition but also the development of social competence, and physical as well as mental health."¹¹¹

There are many examples of the use of indirect SEL at the school as no specific programmes are followed: “The Rinkeby school strategy for development is not “evidence based” in the research sense, but all the awards given to the school over the years should be evidence enough that the strategy works.”¹² However, as Dahlin rightly identifies, the negative aspect of relying on leadership to drive a school can mean that when this leadership changes, the school model may not be a sustainable one.

The school employs multiple strategies for anti-bullying and promotes wellbeing within the school, but does not follow an SEL programme. A school counsellor sees every new pupil a few weeks into the new school year. The school values teachers and its two school counsellors, nurse, study counsellor and psychologist. Yet it is the family grouping and mentoring ideology, where one teacher is responsible for a group of pupils for the duration of their time in school, which is most successful: Pupils can talk about personal, social or moral issues. This ‘family’ of students and one teacher build long relationships throughout the duration of the school forming the kernel of the sustained, positive impact for all the pupils.¹³

It goes without saying that a common theme in all the schools visited was the importance of the student-teacher relationship. This impact has been well documented:

¹² Ibid., p105
¹³ For further information consult, Dahlin, B., “From the worst to the first” – the story of the Rinkeby school, Karlstad University, Sweden
"A relationship characterized by warmth, low conflict, and encouragement can increase the likelihood that kindergarteners for example, will demonstrate appropriate behavior in the classroom. In order to facilitate these relationship-building behaviors, both teacher and students need to possess some basic social competency skills (Gaziano et al 2007)."

Despite this being an obvious connection to identify it is directly relevant to the impact SEL can have on students in a classroom. When SEL is being taught, it naturally involves more ownership from children about their classroom routines, rules and collaborative learning. It is more child-led and teachers facilitate through individual, paired and group work. The teacher’s input into classroom management in the schools visited was far less than in some UK schools. This was due to the pupils having established their own routines of working and being more independent. This only works when mutual respect and a good rapport between teacher and pupil has been built. The powerful effect of combining evidence-based SEL programming in a school environment, that values and cultivates positive student-teacher relationships, should be the aim of all schools. Every pupil should have an engaging teacher who is interested in their learning needs. This is complementary to equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed for their academic achievement but also results in them feeling valued, successful and self-sufficient whatever their academic attainment.

**Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative learning has been raised within the pedagogical world for a few years as the way forward, mirroring the success of the business world. Google, for example, asks its employees to be ‘communicators and collaborators.’ Great learning often occurs in groups and collaboration is ‘the stuff of growth.’ Collaboration is an essential part of the learning environment at NYC Lab, and The School at Columbia University, where children are heavily involved in the learning and decisions of the day.

The school embraces the ethos of SEL in their mission statement using respect and collaborative learning. It implements a personalised SEL programme written by the school psychologists. Underpinning the SEL curriculum is a belief in, and detailed understanding of, child development, which stimulates pupil growth across the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, aesthetic and cognitive, laying the groundwork in Kindergarten for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that later enable pupils to be life long learners. SEL is given value because it is taught like any other subject in the school, with learning goals that are discrete and integrated into the curriculum. SEL is assessed (and reported on) in the same manner as Maths or

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115 This was in evidence in numerous schools I visited in USA and Sweden, to the extend where children were all working on separate things and the teacher only addressed individual children and did not ‘start’ a lesson or address the class as a whole.

116 Webster, A., ‘Collaboration is Key’, *TES*, June 8th 2012, p 35

Literacy. The subject is sub-divided into themes: Self Awareness and Self Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management and Decision Making and Responsible Behaviour.

SEL is in evidence throughout the school in the way the students and staff interrelate and respond to each other in lessons. This was also seen through emphasis on pupil choice and often child-led routines within the class. The atmosphere provides a calm, engaging environment, where teachers greet pupils individually with mutual respect. Some of the key characteristics of socially and emotionally intelligent behaviour within the school are a shared commitment to the value of social and emotional learning; mutual respect between staff and students strengthens discipline. There is time to deliver SEL skills discretely and across the curriculum based on different group and individual need.

Despite being a private school, the demographic is diverse and wide ranging as pupil places are funded by Columbia University. Admission is via a lottery from a broad socially and emotionally diverse neighbourhood. Classes are small in size (max 15) and from Kindergarten to Grade 2 there are two teachers – a lead and an associate teacher. It was noticeable that each pupil’s voice was valued and the teachers cleverly facilitated most discussions so that pupils were the main thinkers and contributors to class topics. A team of school psychologists train and support teaching staff who deliver the SEL curriculum. Psychologists model lessons, discuss pupil needs with staff and work with groups and individuals to develop the ‘social being’ within a learning community.

Kindergarten cultivates the following skills which are developed through the proceeding years; responsibility, accountably for one’s behaviour, words and choices, and an understanding of the implications of one’s actions for oneself and others as applied to academic and social situations. SEL skills are taught at this age through the study of pattern, recognizing them in daily routines, naming their own feelings and those of others, employing self-calming techniques and resolving conflicts using words to express their feelings whilst listening to the needs of friends.

In Grade One SEL skills are explored through Connections, thinking about families, their rituals, feelings and how uniquely important a child is in their own family. Children develop an emotions vocabulary, identify the non-verbal cues of others and appropriate responses, assuming more responsibility for their own actions/attitudes. They study social and emotional functions in terms of cycles - friends argue and resolve arguments, feelings are hurt and repaired. They start to set goals for themselves, learn about turn taking and sharing and that actions affect those around them through the study of change. In Grade Two there is a longer theme of community focusing on expression and structure. They foster independent and co-operative learning working in groups to gain an understanding of interdependence and mutual responsibilities of community members. They build a community wall of collective strengths of the class, build on words to express ranges of feelings and learn about different perspectives, conflict resolution, bullying and bystander behaviour, and how to stand up for themselves in an appropriate manner. They examine how communities express affiliation and build successful communities.118

118 The School at Columbia University, Primary Division Curriculum Overview.
In practice the school is very well resourced, teachers are emotionally literate, well trained and fully understand and believe in the benefits of SEL for academic and social success. There is a consistency in the approach, which is monitored and supported by SEL liaison Heads and Heads of Division.

SEL was observed in practice in the school on numerous occasions but each time there were noticeable patterns: an understanding of different viewpoints and an opportunity to challenge/raise difference in a safe environment; the use of affirming statements and positive language around understanding by staff – ‘that is a good connection’, ‘take a risk’, ‘thank you for sharing,’ a link made within each subject to a social or emotional skill.

In the daily morning meeting, SEL was most noticeable as it was pupil led, teacher facilitated, and served as a perfect example of how children can interact in a socially mature and emotionally intelligent manner. Pupils in Grade 3 engaged in a ‘grown up’ form of conversation where they did not raise their hands but learnt the social cues of conversing; waiting to interject with relevant comments, raising an opposing view; responding appropriately and bringing a topic to a close. They were emotionally literate and able to listen and comment on the views of peers without raising their hands or becoming frustrated at not being heard, as is often the case with this age group. They used different hand signals to agree with a peer views or show they had made a connection. This environment was facilitated by the teacher’s excellent use of questioning and ability to use the process of the discussion to show the pupils what skills they were developing.

The experience at The School highlighted that in order for SEL to be successful it needs a whole school approach. The school was built in 2004, and has strong links to Columbia University. SEL is an embedded culture and philosophy, valued by the teachers, who are emotionally literate within their classrooms, dedicating the time required and making links across the curriculum. SEL, like all subjects, needs to be consistently delivered, monitored, managed and led at all levels. Pupils need common bonding experiences that are tangible; they need to see why it is important to work collaboratively and to see the results. Parents need to be involved in understanding how SEL is delivered and assessed and that facilitating these skills leads to academic and social success. This is a strong message at NYC Lab Collaborative School, highlighted in the mission statement: “Inspired by the power of collaboration, the Lab School challenges students to soar intellectually and to act bravely in our complex world community.” The school is committed to a broader understanding of intelligence, which includes the development of social and emotional skills. Underlying this approach is the recognition that students will care more about learning if they feel they are cared for as individuals. The classrooms are positive environments, which feel inclusive and there are obviously good rapport between students and staff. This was seen in an 11th Grade physics class, where there was evident respect between pupils and staff. A mood metre was used in relation to finding out results of a test paper; linking how students were encouraged to discuss their emotional response so as to benefit their future performance and their ability to progress in the subject.
The school is currently working with Dr Brackett, and will be fully implementing the Ruler programme at the start of the new academic year. At present they use the habits of Lab learners, which are values and skills that the teachers believe should be developed within the pupils. They include: questioning and being curious, observing closely, thinking flexibly and seeing multiple perspectives, reflecting, persisting, connecting, collaborating, tolerating ambiguity and taking responsibility and risks.

School guidance counsellors are given more time away from administrative duties so they can focus on pupils, and they also move up with students each year so as to secure relationships through the school.

There is a requirement for students to be responsible. They sign an ‘honor code’ similar to a school contract and are expected to complete 54 hours of community service. The Principal states that this is part of building character and social responsibility: “By applying your time, energy and skills toward addressing real needs in our community, we believe that you will deepen your understanding of the world’s interdependent structure and the impact that you, as an individual, can make toward improving our community.” The school was recently ranked as third best by the New York Post, who summarised some of the core values of SEL: “This sought-after, non-traditional small school offers challenging academics with a humanistic bent, a dynamic teaching style and project-based learning in a non-cutthroat environment.”

As has been seen, schools that embed SEL into the curriculum and beyond often have strong leaders and staff that value and give time to social and emotional competencies. By including SEL as a taught curriculum subject, linked to cross curricula learning, it can then be assessed and reported on giving it credibility and validity. Children are not always taught key social and emotional skills, and even if they have an enriched family home environment, being able to transfer these SEL skills to a school classroom and to their learning is not automatic. Schools therefore have to be the environment where children rehearse SEL skills in a safe place, modelled by teachers and school leaders so that social and emotional skills become integrated to learning; just as emotion is to life.

**Conclusion:** “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

There is a significant body of research documenting the connection between social and emotional development and academic performance and how these programmes help students to learn. Most SEL assessment at present is an afterthought but we may be on the cusp of a new era where more conclusive assessments are developed. At present behaviour rating scales and self-report assessment are the most widely used researched methods in assessing SEL competencies. A mixture of teacher and

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119 Maya Angelou
120 For example: Catalano, Durlak, Greenberg, Goleman, Gueldner, Merrell, Weissberg, Zins etc
student reporting seems to be the most useful, yet there are calls for the same approach as academic subjects where data analysis can lead to tracking pupil progress. However this analysis will always be subject to criticism due to the very nature of social and emotional competencies and skills, which can not always rule out other environmental influences. SEL implementation changes and evolves, based on feedback and self-evaluation from schools. SEL is a habit of practice. As with all school programmes or initiatives it is imperative to ensure that once introduced and in place that there is frequent monitoring. This is in order to ensure the impact can be measured and that it is fully integrated into the school day, curriculum and ethos. If, as noted above, assessment of SEL was prioritised, reported on to parents and graded, them more value would be attributed to the subject. 122

As has been seen in Part Two, there is thorough research into the criteria needed for successful implementation of SEL so that it has a lasting impact on pupils. Overall, from visiting the schools in America and Sweden, I believe that the most important and essential component for the successful delivery of SEL and consequent impact on the pupils lies with the commitment from the Headteacher to a long term, whole school approach to SEL. If every adult is involved and trained then the likelihood of SEL being infused into the curriculum and the culture of the school increases. In addition there needs to be a carefully selected, evidence based programme, adapted to reflect the individual needs of the school community. Like any curriculum, SEL programmes need to be monitored, evaluated and revised in order for them to impact upon the various social and emotional learning needs of pupils, year on year.

Much research has been done into the benefits of SEL yet, this is not conclusive and we are now entering an exciting phase, where SEL is more prolific within education; mirroring the increase of social and emotional needs seen within our children and young people. There is an acknowledgment that the needs of children are changing and it can be seen that part of the responsibility of the education system is to evolve to meet these needs. This is a contentious issue, revolving around what society values within an education, and yet it is opportune to reflect here on the core message coming from the wealth of research and literature on SEL. Despite the diversity of the schools visited, there was one central theme, common to all; an acceptance that SEL is valuable and essential for pupils to learn and thrive. With strong leaders in place to drive and maintain the programmes, committed staff who value and see the benefits of SEL, all schools can work towards embedding SEL into the curriculum, and most importantly, the school culture. Ken Robinson highlights the unpredictability of the future that we are preparing and educating children for. Our current system often seems to inadvertently dampen creativity through a narrowing of focus. Robinson argues that at ‘the heart of the challenge is to reconstitute our sense of ability and of intelligence.’ 123 Putting more emphasis on valuing all skills and not just academic, would be one way to broaden our values, and achieve a balance between the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills: 124 “We have to recognise that human flourishing is not a mechanical process,

122 Anchorage School District are constantly evolving their assessment processes to make it valuable and relevant and this is also an area CASEL are researching at present.
124 Parker, P., ‘Finding a Pattern to Follow,’ TES, May 25th 2012, p7
it’s an organic process, and you can not predict the outcome of human development, all you can do, like farmers, is create the conditions under which they but can flourish.”  

Yet, in a time when even more emphasis is given to comparative league tables and school improvement through academic statistics, there is often no time to begin to reflect on the model of education that society needs. It is vital for schools to continue to seek self-improvement and to be accountable to raise the standard and opportunity for each pupil. Yet there seems to be an over reliance on data driven results at the detriment of pupil well-being, where a child’s emotional and social development are valued less. This is a warning heeded by Kokkenen, in her work relating to the Finnish school system, which is at the top of the international league tables, but where ‘academic alpha adolescents cannot be produced at any cost.”

We have moved far away from Dickens’s Grangrind style of education with the emphasis on filling up empty vessels with facts: the head and the heart both demand equal attention. Yet whether they receive equal attention is the question. Robinson, a champion for developing a more creative and relevant educational model, argues this point in The Element How Finding your Passion Changes Everything. He states:

“We need to evolve a new appreciation of the importance of nurturing human talent along with an understanding of how talent expresses itself differently in every individual. We need to create environments in our schools, in our workplaces, and in our public offices, where every person is inspired to grow creatively.”

The call for creativity relates to the arguments surrounding a skills-based versus knowledge-based curriculum: a discussion that is well debated and is unlikely to abate with the imminent unveiling of the revised Primary Curriculum. Graduates of the future will need more than academic skills to compete with global colleagues, skills such as and leadership skills, character and emotional aptitude, all developed through SEL. It is not just schools in America and Sweden where SEL is gaining importance. It has been seen that many countries are currently in the process of assessing and reforming their education systems. This is most evident in the East, with Korea and Singapore. It is not just the influence of PISA or UNICEF reports, into comparative academic attainment or child wellbeing, that is driving these reforms but the fact that education needs to evolve to meet the needs of each generation. This theme is reverberant across the world, Ken Robinson argues, because of cultural and economic reasons. Countries wish to prepare children to be part of the global economy whilst retaining individual cultural identities, but they are not addressing these issues creatively as they are ‘trying to meet the future by doing what they did in the past.’ Businesses and universities, from Singapore to the UK, have claimed that pupils are not thinking critically, creatively or that they lack

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initiative, resilience and character. Singapore and Finland are testament to the fact that there is a price to pay for being at the top of the academic league and both countries have now incorporated SEL into their school systems.

There is urgency amongst many pedagogics to debate what is important and what is valued in education in our society in response to the challenges that face children and young people in their future roles and personal lives. More emphasis on SEL in schools, would lead to better attainment in academic subjects but also an appreciation of the need to shape children’s characters and prepare them for the skills of life. The TES is often full of articles addressing the social and emotional needs of pupils and indeed teachers, as emotion is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning. From September aspiring teachers will have their social skills tested as part of an initiative to assess the non-cognitive ability of applicants for teacher training. This adds weight and recognition to the importance of emotional and social intelligence required in teaching and learning. If SEL was given the creditability, the value, and time, it needs to embed into schools then many, but by no means all, of the social and emotional issues facing children in schools could begin to be addressed: “We may not be able to predict the future but we can help to shape it.”

The experience of visiting many different schools and meeting academics and educationists, in America and Sweden, was incredibly valuable and insightful. It enabled me to witness the personal impact of SEL on the pupils, the teachers and the communities that each school served. Linda Lantieri, a formidable pioneer and ardent supporter of SEL, succinctly called for a sea change within education in 1996, which I feel is equally as poignant in 2012. It serves as an apt conclusion to the many lessons I have gained from my travelling fellowship:

“Our society needs a new way of thinking about what it means to be an educated person. We can no longer turn away from the emotional fabric of children’s lives or assume that learning can take place isolated from their feelings. We need a vision of education that recognizes that the ability to manage our emotions, resolve conflicts, and interrupt biases are fundamental skills- skills that can and must be taught.”

129 Victor Allen, Make their Classroom fears float away, 1st June 2012, Knowsley, J., ‘Pushed to the Brink’, TES, 1st June 2012
130 Madden, K., (2012) ‘Got the Personality for it? We’ll be the judge of that,’ TES 2012, 8th June, p20, 2012
131 Ken Robinson, (2009) p17
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Key Websites

**American Education Research Association** The American Educational Research Association (AERA), founded in 1916, is concerned with improving the educational process by encouraging scholarly inquiry related to education and evaluation and [www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net).

**Anchorage School District** has invaluable resources about SEL programme, statistical data and model standards and links to numerous useful websites [www.asd12.org](http://www.asd12.org).

**Authentic Happiness** A useful site with practical downloads and suggestions for teaching tools based on Martin Seligman’s positive psychology: a branch of psychology which focuses on the empirical study of such things as positive emotions, strengths-based character, and healthy institutions. [www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu)

**Cambridge University The Well-being Institute** [www.cambridgewellbeing.org/action_children.html](http://www.cambridgewellbeing.org/action_children.html)

**Center for Investigating Healthy Minds** The Center for Investigating Healthy Minds (CIHM) at University of Wisconsin-Madison conducts rigorous interdisciplinary research on healthy qualities of mind such as kindness, compassion, forgiveness and mindfulness; from behavioural to neuroscientific to scholars in the humanities. Has interesting links to research. [www.investigatinghealthyminds.org](http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org) and see [www.richardjdavidson.com/research](http://www.richardjdavidson.com/research)

**Centre for Social and Emotional Education** aims to promote positive and sustained school climate: a safe, supportive environment that nurtures social and emotional, ethical, and academic skills. Information based website. [www.csee.net](http://www.csee.net)

**Circle of Courage** The Circle of Courage® Philosophy is a model of positive youth development based on four universal growth needs of all children: belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. [www.circleofcourageinstitute.org](http://www.circleofcourageinstitute.org) and [www.reclaiming.com/content/about-circle-of-courage](http://www.reclaiming.com/content/about-circle-of-courage)

**Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning** CASEL works to advance the science and evidence based practice of social and emotional learning (SEL). [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

**Conscientious Discipline** very useful programme and website with resources which has in part been implemented by the Anchorage School District [www.consciou discipline.com](http://www.consciou discipline.com)

**Edutopia** has video examples of SEL lessons and workshops in practice [www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning](http://www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning)

**Health, Emotional and Behavioral Laboratory:** The mission of the HEB Laboratory is to translate psychological science into action. The group’s focus is on emotional skills and competencies, health cognition and health behavior relevant to cancer and HIV/AIDS prevention, and the interactions among these areas of study. Yale University Laboratory: [www.heblab.research.yale.edu/heblab-yale/myweb.php?hls=10061](http://www.heblab.research.yale.edu/heblab-yale/myweb.php?hls=10061)

**Illinois State Board of Education** useful standards for SEL and a webinar and study aids for implementing SEL [www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm](http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm)

**Inner Resilience Program**, a project of the Tides Center, founded in 2002 in response to the effects of the events of September 11, 2001 on New York City schools. The aim of the programme being to equip school staff and parents with the skills to build back their inner strength, to model them for the children in their care, [www.innerresilience-tidescenter.org](http://www.innerresilience-tidescenter.org) and [www.lindalantieri.org](http://www.lindalantieri.org)

**Kelsos Choice** Popular conflict management choice programme used by many schools in the USA [www.kelsoschoice.com](http://www.kelsoschoice.com)
Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience interesting articles about research on the brain mechanics underlying emotion and emotion regulation [wwwpsyphz.psych.wisc.edu](http://wwwpsyphz.psych.wisc.edu)

Mindfulness in Schools Project A project run in conjunction with the Department of Psychiatry, University of Cambridge, Well-being Institute [www.mindfulnessinschools.org](http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

Mornignside Centre for Teaching Social Responsibility educates young people for hopeful and intelligent engagement with their world. A national leader in fostering social and emotional learning through training [www.morningsidecenter.org](http://www.morningsidecenter.org) and [www.teachablemoment.org](http://www.teachablemoment.org)


Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org) is a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioural practices for improving important academic and behaviour outcomes for all students.

Ruler Approach A thorough exploration of the programme used in many schools in the USA, UK and around the world [www.therulerapproach.org](http://www.therulerapproach.org) and [www.ie-schools.org](http://www.ie-schools.org)

Rutgers Social and Emotional Learning Laboratory (RU-SELL) focuses on understanding the relationship of academic achievement, social-emotion competencies, and the development of character and a core set of life principles, and the development of school-based interventions to strengthen social-emotion skills, character, and one’s Laws of Life, and prevent bullying, violence and victimization, substance abuse, and related problem behaviour [www.rci.rutgers.edu/~melas](http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~melas)

Second Step Programme, Committee for Children, works globally to prevent bullying, violence and child abuse, Seattle, Washington USA, [www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)

Social Development Research Group: A nationally recognized, interdisciplinary team of researchers working to understand and promote healthy behaviors and positive social development among children, adolescents, and young adults. Publications, PowerPoint presentations, and other prevention resources can be found on this site. [www.sdrg.org](http://www.sdrg.org)

UCLA Centre for Mental Health in Schools A useful website with a virtual toolkit for understanding mental health in schools with practical tips and information for the classroom. [www.smph.psych.ucla.edu](http://www.smph.psych.ucla.edu)

University of Illinois Chicago, Social and Emotional Learning Research Group excellent website with downloadable reports and up to date research and reviews (linked to CASEL) [www.uic.edu/labs/selrg/projects.html](http://www.uic.edu/labs/selrg/projects.html)

Young Minds is the UK’s leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
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Cook, J., (2005) *My Mouth is a Volcano*, National Center for Youth Issues


**Interactive Media**


www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00z5bqd/Analysis_Testing_the_Emotions


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www.edutopia.org/math-social-activity-cooperative-learning-video

Philips, A., *The Myth of Happiness*


Robinson, K., *Changing Education Dec 2010*

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