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Teacher Perspectives on Implementing Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum at an International Baccalaureate Elementary School

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Abstract

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MA, Walden University, 2013

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Teachers have difficulty implementing a social-emotional learning (SEL) program in the classroom at an International Baccalaureate (IB) elementary school in Georgia. As a district mandated initiative, elementary schools in the metro area have included SEL programs as an essential part of the curriculum to support the needs of the whole student. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives on implementing SEL at an IB elementary school. The conceptual framework drawn from Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory, focuses on what an individual does to implement and adopt an intervention. The study's guiding question explored 15 IB teachers' perspectives on the challenges they faced when implementing an SEL curriculum. Following each teacher interview, the data were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed. The key findings indicated that participants received different levels of support, along with possible implementation challenges. Some of the challenges included time to implement, teaching abstract concepts and second language learners, sticking to the curriculum, and executing the Child Protection Unit. This study may contribute to social change by informing district and school leaders of best practices necessary to ensure the sustainability and implementation process of SEL programs in IB elementary schools. SEL curriculum and program initiatives that are implemented with fidelity may improve teachers' pedagogy and the wellbeing of students.

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Dedication

I dedicate this project study to Kali Campbell, Jami Washington, Beth Rountree, and in loving memory, my sister Teri. My educational journey has been inspired by these four women who have been a great support system and have encouraged me to advance my education.

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Completing the project study would not be possible without the support of my committee: chairperson, Dr. Marilynn Robb; member, Dr. Grace Lappin; and university research reviewer, Dr. Cheryl Burleigh. The team provided constructive feedback, which was necessary for producing the project. In addition, they provided encouragement and assistance throughout this process. Also, special thanks to the participants who provided critical data needed for the project.

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Section 1: The Problem

Teachers have grappled with how to implement a new curriculum effectively, in particular, social emotional learning (SEL) programs (Schonert-Reicht, 2017). Social emotional learning is a curricular approach that consists of teaching core social emotional competencies related to identifying and regulating students' emotions, setting positive goals, demonstrating empathy and understanding the perspectives of others, cultivating and sustaining positive relationships, making socially responsible decisions, and handling interpersonal conflicts constructively (Cook et al., 2018). According to Durlak (2016), program outcomes are significantly affected when implementation is effective; desired results may not be achieved if program execution is poor. Furthermore, while social and emotional learning has been shown to influence program outcomes such as sustainability, without institutionalizing SEL practices through training and garnering support from all teachers, even the best programs eventually disappear or fail (Brackett & Patti, 2016).

Although SEL curricular implementation will look different depending on the teacher's perspectives and instructional systems in place, experts agree that teachers play a critical role in this process (Martinez, 2016; Wanless & Domitrovich, 2015). Similarly, Buettner et al. (2016) explained that teachers' perspectives of SEL contribute to the fidelity in which the curriculum or program is being implemented. For teachers to effectively execute SEL programs and curriculum, stakeholders must ensure that teachers are adequately supported to develop a relational pedagogical orientation to foster positive social and emotional development (Reeves & Le Mare, 2017). Once teachers have

participated in professional development and have been equipped with materials and resources, they should adjust their practices and delivery of the SEL curriculum.

Rogers (1983) and Fisher (2005) supported the notion that sustainability in use of an intervention was strengthened when an individual works through a concept called "reinventing," or the degree to which an innovation is changed or modified by a user in the process of its adoption and implementation. Modifying the curriculum during the process of SEL application allows teachers to reflect on what is working for their students and what areas need improvement. Highly effective teachers are experts who reflect on their performance and are capable of making adjustments or reinventing their teaching practices (Fisher, 2005). In addition, teachers' knowledge and perspectives of SEL are critical factors to effective application of SEL (Martinez, 2016). Because teachers must be actively involved and willing to make changes throughout the process of implementation, provisions must be in place to establish supportive belief systems. To ensure sustainability of an SEL curriculum, teachers need continuous monitoring, feedback, incentives, and opportunities for professional training in areas regarding SEL (Low et al., 2016).

Schools have increasingly focused on the implementation of quality teaching practices and professional development that supports such practices (Labone & Long, 2016). To provide teachers with optimal SEL execution experiences, stakeholders must provide teachers with training, application resources, and evidence-based strategies to support the challenges teachers may encounter. Also, teachers need professional learning that focuses strongly on how to change their beliefs and attitudes about SEL (Schonert-

Reicht, 2017). Not only do teachers need concrete training and resources on how to employ SEL effectively, but they also need coaching on how to change their mindset and viewpoints about SEL. Martinsone and Vilcina (2017) noted that teachers' attitudes, levels of motivation, involvement, and willingness to participate in additional training and supervision sessions might significantly influence the effective maintenance of an SEL program. Schools can increase SEL competence and capabilities through active policies and structures, supports that build strong relationships among stakeholders, ongoing professional development, and continuous feedback (Stickle et al., 2019).

The Local Problem

In the 2015-2016 school year, the Atlanta Public School District (APSD) required all 50 elementary schools to implement and embed the Second Step SEL curriculum into their academic day as well as their school culture. Of the 50 elementary schools, 10 are International Baccalaureate (IB) authorized programmes, 10 are IB candidate programmes, and two are IB consideration programmes. The problem that informs this study is that teachers have difficulty executing an SEL program in the classroom at a PK-5 IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) public elementary school located in the southeastern United States. Teachers and stakeholders at this authorized IB PYP have incorporated the Second Step SEL program in each homeroom alongside the IB curriculum. Teachers have to adjust their compact schedules to accommodate weekly requirements from the district regarding the implementation of the SEL curriculum. The assistant principal noted that teachers had expressed their concerns and challenges with how to teach a new curriculum with fidelity (Assistant Principal, personal

communication, March 11, 2020). Many educators feel pressured to address multiple, challenging priorities at the same time and might perceive the responsibility of incorporating SEL in the classroom as an additional burden on their high workload (Oberle et al., 2016).

Teachers at an IB PYP public elementary school have expressed their concerns about SEL curriculum, instruction, and resources to the administration team, which includes the school's counselor and the IB Coordinator (Assistant Principal, personal communication, March 11, 2020). Over two months, teachers participated in a pulse check during faculty meetings in which they were asked to respond to questions specifically about SEL implementation. Teachers were provided open-ended questions to articulate their feelings regarding SEL execution. Documented evidence of challenges that teachers faced was provided from a pulse check technique in which teachers recorded their experiences with SEL implementation. After compiling the results, the IB Coordinator at the IB PYP public elementary school stated that some of the concerns of the teachers included, not enough time to teach the program, feeling overwhelmed, no accountability measures to monitor performance, and that some of the lessons were not developmentally and culturally relevant (IB Coordinator, personal communication, August 15, 2019). Although some steps have been taken to streamline parts of the SEL, the school counselor stated that teachers still present challenges with content delivery and prioritizing time to implement (School Counselor, personal communication, March 16, 2020).

The information from the pulse check regarding SEL was shared with the school's leadership team, the local school governance team (GO teams), and later included in the school's strategic plan, which can be accessed on the local site's homepage. The GO team consists of two parents and two educators representing as governing bodies that help provide directions for the school by offering input on finances, developing strategic plans, and addressing student needs (McCray, 2018). Every school in the APSD must include how they will account for the implementation of SEL in the culture section of the school's improvement or strategic plan. By considering teachers' perspectives involving the process of executing an SEL curriculum, the local problem can be addressed as a justification to increase the sustainability of SEL at the IB PYP public elementary school.

Rationale

Many teachers recognize the importance of implementing social and emotional learning; however, teachers often feel as though they do not have the time or tools to support SEL (Yoder & Nolan, 2018). The justification for the problem of this study stemmed from the difficulties and challenges that teachers at an IB PYP public elementary school have faced while executing the SEL curriculum. The IB Coordinator at the IB PYP public elementary school in the (APSD) indicated that at least one teacher from each grade level expressed concern about implementing SEL, with one of the issues being that some teachers were not applying SEL consistently because of additional instructional and organizational priorities from the school and district (IB Coordinator, personal communication, January 3, 2020). These concerns warrant research on how teachers perceive challenges they have encountered during the process of implementing

an SEL curriculum and what support and resources do teachers need to employ an SEL curriculum at the IB PYP public elementary school effectively.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the perspectives of teachers about the implementation of an SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school through the interview process. The goal is to find ways to improve SEL curriculum implementation. This study will be conducted hoping that SEL stakeholders will use the findings to inform application processes such as curriculum delivery, that support teachers in executing school initiatives and programs.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this qualitative project study, the following terms are defined:

International Baccalaureate (IB): A nonprofit foundation that developed four educational programmes including Primary Years (PYP), Middle Years (MYP), Diploma (DP), and Career related (CRP), for students from age 3 to 19 that focus on teaching students to think critically and independently, and how to inquire with care and logic (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020).

Primary Years Programme (PYP): An IB curriculum framework designed for students aged 3 to 12 to develop academic, social and emotional wellbeing, focusing on international mindedness and strong personal values (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2020).

Professional development: A critical component of establishing and enhancing the educational quality of early childhood programs, usually through in-service training (Schachter et al., 2019).

Resources: Tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge (Hill et al., 2015).

Second Step SEL: Research based, teacher-informed, and classroom-tested to promote the social emotional development, safety, and wellbeing of students from Early Learning through Grade 8 (Second Step, 2020).

Social emotional learning (SEL): The process by which students and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Weissberg, 2019).

Stakeholders: Anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials such as school board members, city councilors, and state representatives (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).

Significance of the Study

This study will address a local problem by focusing specifically on SEL implementation at an IB PYP public elementary school. The study addresses an under-researched area as there is interest among stakeholders on how schools can better integrate SEL into classrooms in addition to traditional academic curricula (Swartz, 2016). The results of this study may provide insight into how to provide teachers with the necessary tools and resources to implement SEL effectively. The potential findings may lead to social change as teaching SEL skills may foster development for young people

who are knowledgeable, responsible, caring, and contributing citizens (Domitrovich et. al., 2017). Supporting teachers to improve pedagogy and practices may help to ensure that all teachers effectively apply SEL along with the PYP curriculum at the IB public APSD elementary school.

Stakeholders must strive to enhance the wellbeing of students through collaboration and supportive measures regarding the implementation of the SEL curriculum. SEL instruction has the potential to alter the course of a student's life, change their view of the world, and contribute to social change (Schonert-Reicht, 2017). Effective SEL application at this local site may produce future citizens that are capable of understanding and managing emotions, setting and achieving positive goals, feeling and showing empathy for others, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and making responsible decisions within the community. When social and emotional learning is infused into every part of students' daily lives, they may be able to transfer these skills when they go home and interact in their communities.

Research Question

The challenges that teachers are facing at an IB elementary school with implementing the SEL curriculum effectively are unclear, and the purpose of this qualitative study will be to explore their perspectives to see what personnel or community supports and academic resources may be needed to be successful. The research question correlates with the local problem of evaluating teachers' perspectives and the difficulty of implementing an SEL curriculum at an IB elementary school. The study has been designed to answer the following question:

RQ1: What are PK-5 teachers' perspectives on implementing the Second Step

SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

Rogers' (1983) theory of diffusion and the diffusion of innovations (DOI) model

was drawn for this study's conceptual framework, sometimes coined the innovation

decision-making process (IDMP). Rogers (1995) defined diffusion theory as the process

by which an innovation or intervention is communicated through specific channels over

time among members of a social system. His research focused on the choices and actions

an individual engages over time to implement and adopt an innovation. Through his

work, Rogers (2003) created the model of the IMDP, which consists of five sequential

stages, including knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation

through which individuals transition from gaining initial knowledge, forming an attitude,

deciding to adopt or reject, executing, and confirming the decision to implement the

innovation. Each of the IDMP stages provide a basis for understanding how changes are

applied when an innovation is adopted or rejected.

Sustaining the use of an intervention is the ultimate goal once the execution of the

innovation has begun (Fisher, 2005). Components within the implementation stage are

relevant to this qualitative study: (a) the desirability to collaborate with SEL stakeholders,

(b) the need to connect a purpose for employing the SEL program, and (c) the

requirement to see the modeling of program application along with the opportunity to

practice what has been modeled (Rogers, 2003). Evaluating the perspectives of teachers

may show a breakdown in the DOI model at the implementation stage, which may require teachers to modify or adjust the SEL curriculum as needed. Rogers (2003) examined how teachers executed innovations, and whether they made significant changes to the innovation as it was employed. He developed a strategy called reinvention, "the degree to which an innovation is changed or modified by a user in the process of its adoption and implementation" to increase the likelihood of effective application (Fisher, 2005, p. 5). Sustainability in the use of an intervention or program is strengthened when an individual works through a concept called reinventing (Fisher, 2005).

Rejection and adoption are the communication channels or phases of the implementation stage that teachers go through when making decisions on how to execute a new intervention effectively. Teachers' first knowledge of an innovation or intervention causes them to form an attitude of continued adoption, later adoption, discontinuance, or continued rejection. Then, they decide to adopt or reject the intervention, and application becomes dependent on the teacher's usage and interpretation of the information given during staff development. Failure to implement interventions often occurs because it challenges teachers to change their instructional practice (Rogers, 2003). Teachers must adjust their pedagogy and develop an understanding amongst stakeholders about the best approaches to administering an SEL curriculum effectively. The strategy of reinvention can be adopted by teachers so that they can modify the curriculum to fit their teaching styles and accommodate student's needs. By finding a break in DOI theory, best practices can be adjusted to develop understanding.

Rogers' (2003) work has been widely used in early childhood education to understand better how teachers implement and sustain the use of innovations. His concepts relate to this qualitative study's approach, as the theory of diffusion can address problems that teachers may have implementing the SEL curriculum at an IB public APSD elementary school. Regarding this study, DOI may be a perceived challenge that teachers face when employing the SEL curriculum. Rogers' diffusion research in education relates to the research questions and instrument development, which will allow teachers to express their perspective on the SEL curriculum and may help determine the supports and resources needed for effective diffusion of content. To execute any innovation or intervention successfully requires a widespread diffusion of best practices, knowledge, and strategies that are learned from professional development (Fisher, 2005). Through effective communication, teachers can share their expertise, challenges, and experiences with implementing SEL so that they can adjust pedagogy based on what is necessary for their classroom.

Review of the Broader Problem

This literature review provides an in-depth examination of the current research on teacher perspectives for implementing the SEL curriculum. A critical analysis of the literature was conducted to synthesize the information; similarities and differences were highlighted between the peer reviewed articles. Specific search terms and efforts were used to find relevant themes within the literature regarding the problem of this study. By taking this approach, the following terms were examined: SEL curriculum, the fidelity of application, teacher perspectives of implementing an SEL curriculum, effective SEL

instructional strategies, and Rogers' diffusion theory in education. Gaps in literature were identified, along with areas that needed further research.

Sources were used throughout the comprehensive review, including Walden University Library, EBSCO, Google Scholar, ProQuest, ERIC, and various educational websites. The search terms used included: social emotional learning, SEL implementation, challenges and benefits of SEL programs, effectiveness of SEL programs, teacher perspectives of implementing SEL, and implementation strategies and approaches. The keywords were selected based on the importance of practical implementation skills, which resulted in themes for this study.

Social-Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning is the process of integrating cognition, emotion, and behavior in our lives (Brackett et al., 2019). Goleman (1995) formulated his social-emotional intelligence research by synthesizing a broader range of previous scientific findings, exploring how emotions regulate the brain through self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The concept of social emotional-intelligence has become ubiquitous amongst educators in the forms of SEL programs. As a cofounder of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) organization, Goleman ensured that the primary goal for SEL programs is to develop and enhance five interrelated competencies that include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The ability to encode, interpret, and organize emotional and social information are skills needed to engage in learning, develop self- and social- awareness, and make responsible

decisions that are particularly relevant during early childhood (Humphries et al., 2018).

With growing concern about the prevalence of childhood social emotional problems,

teachers are increasingly expected to take on pedagogical responsibility for students'

proficiency in SEL (Reeves & Le Mare, 2017).

SEL Implementation

SEL programs and interventions have become a part of teachers' daily curriculum

as they are responsible for implementation (Blewitt et al., 2020). Conversations about

educational reform and the application of SEL into policy and curriculum are flourishing

and have become a worldwide phenomenon with approaches and programs being

executed in many countries across the globe (Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Since teachers are

primarily responsible for absorbing new information and implementing educational

programs directly to students, their attitudes may influence how the program is perceived,

the program's delivery, and influence the program's outcomes. Teachers' viewpoints can

play an essential role in their SEL-specific experiences at work, which affects program

processes and curriculum outcomes. There is an ongoing discussion regarding the most

effective ways in which teachers can employ an SEL program or curriculum so that the

best results can be achieved (Martinsone & Vilcina, 2017).

Policymakers and stakeholders rely on teachers as they play an essential role in

implementation and enhancement of the SEL curriculum. According to Bailey et al.

(2019), successful execution of the SEL curriculum is most effective when teachers are

encouraged to apply and adapt strategies in the classroom and reflect their experiences

throughout teaching. This research supports previous research conducted by Martinsone

and Damberga (2017) that examined teacher reflections on their strengths and weaknesses of employing an SEL program. The majority of the teachers' reflections focused upon their pupils' performance or their professional competencies, with a relatively small percentage of teachers who reflected upon their skills concerning the successful implementation of the program. The results of the study imply that teachers should be encouraged to place greater focus on their abilities of self-observation and reflection regarding their own social and emotional competencies for them to more effectively apply the SEL program (Martinsone & Damberga, 2017). By examining the strengths and weaknesses of teachers who have executed SEL, practical strategies can be created and adopted from these reflective experiences to increase the effectiveness of implementation.

While the high-quality application of an SEL curriculum is ideal for elementary schools, the reality is that not all classrooms receive effective instruction. Although research supports the positive effects of implementing SEL programming, many teachers faced challenges with execution and accountability for SEL outcomes (Osher et al., 2016). Some of the positive effects of employing SEL programs include the promotion of positive personal development, reduction of problem behaviors, and improved academic achievement and citizenship (Cristóvão et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2017). The experiences of executing the SEL curriculum will vary for each teacher based on prior training, resources, and their level of fidelity. Fidelity of curriculum implementation is essential because of the critical role it plays in understanding how and why curriculum materials work and how they can be improved (Superfine et al., 2015). For students to receive

practical instruction, teachers must be fully committed to work by having the necessary

resources to execute lessons, and receive continuous training to adjust best practices.

Teachers' Perspectives of SEL Implementation

Teachers' perspectives of their experiences with SEL programs and curriculum

may influence the process of their ability to implement the program in elementary

schools effectively. Humphries et al. (2018) conducted a study about early childhood

teachers' perspectives of classroom-based SEL programs and the process of application,

adding to what is qualitatively known about U.S. teachers' perspectives of SEL

implementation. The study sample included 15 teachers of early childhood education

using classroom-based SEL programs with young students living in an urban

environment. Data were collected using qualitative focus groups in which five themes

emerging from the analysis included curricula and program design, responsibility,

contextual relevance, support, and classroom barriers. Although not all participating

teachers had extensive experience with SEL programs, they had strong opinions about

how such programs should be employed with other classroom and school-based programs

(Humphries et al., 2018).

In a similar study, Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin (2017) identified teachers'

perspectives on SEL programs, which showed that teachers had little to no experience

with implementation. Humphries et al. (2018) and Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin (2017)

shared similar purposes for their studies, which were designed to understand better

teacher's perspectives about their experiences with executing SEL. Although teachers

lacked experience with applying SEL programs in the classroom, they considered SEL to

be important in their roles, despite their inadequacies (Esen-Aygun & Sahin-Taskin, 2017). The findings of Humphries et al. were similar to those of Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin, showing that teachers believed that it was their professional responsibility to promote SEL education for young students in the school environment despite their experiences with implementation. Also, Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin noted that some teachers were unknowingly teaching SEL skills despite not having adequate information, resources, and training.

Despite teachers' varying levels of experiences with implementing SEL programs, the research of Humphries et al. (2018) and Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin (2017) supported the need to understand their perspectives to improve the outcomes of SEL programs. Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin and Humphries et al. also agreed that teachers' perspectives about their experiences with SEL implementation should be acknowledged and evaluated so that all stakeholders can help improve teacher practices and experiences in the classroom. The research purpose and findings of Humphries et al. and Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin supported the need for the current study in understanding teacher's perspectives of their experiences with executing an SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school. Due to limited research in the field about SEL application in IB PYP public elementary schools, understanding teachers' perspectives may provide insight into how to improve their classroom experiences.

Along with teachers' perspectives of their experiences, research has found that teachers' implementation of SEL program lessons and practices is associated with teacher beliefs (Hanson-Peterson et al., 2016). A critical study led by Collie et al. (2015)

examined teachers' beliefs about social emotional learning and identified teacher profiles concerning job stress or satisfaction. The Colle et al. study included 1,267 teachers, 664 teachers in Sample 1, and 603 teachers in Sample 2. Teachers filled out online questionnaires with socio-demographic items presented first, followed by stress, job satisfaction, and SEL belief items. A heavy focus was placed on the SEL belief profiles, which indicated that the teachers had varying levels of comfort and perceived feelings of support for SEL. The differences in teacher beliefs appear to be associated with teacher outcomes (stress and satisfaction) known to influence the effectiveness of an SEL program and student outcomes (Collie et al., 2015).

Furthermore, Hanson-Peterson et al. (2016) conducted a more succinct study regarding teachers' beliefs about SEL implementation; however, they differed in methods and data collection by using a quasi-experimental approach. The study comprised 38 elementary school teachers who were assigned to the program intervention group or a control group, which showed how teacher's beliefs were examined in association with their application of the SEL program extension activities. Although Hanson-Peterson et al. and Collie et al. used different approaches to collect and analyze data, they agreed on the importance of teachers' SEL beliefs. These beliefs appear to have implications for teachers and may ultimately be associated with student outcomes and program application effectiveness. Examining elementary school teachers' beliefs and implementing SEL programs (Hanson-Peterson et al., 2016) and examining teacher SEL belief profiles (Collie et al., 2015) proved to be highly informative for this current analysis. Teachers' views and beliefs about the implementation of SEL should be

analyzed further to seek valuable information that could support the future execution of SEL programs in IB elementary schools.

As teachers' perspectives of their beliefs may affect the implementation of an SEL curriculum, perspectives of social emotional competence may also influence their experiences. Poulou (2016) examined the relationship among teachers' perspectives of SEL competence, teaching efficacy, and how these factors influence interactions with their students. The study participants included 98 elementary school teachers who completed questionnaires about themselves and 2–5 students in their class, totaling 617 questionnaires. The measures of personal and professional SEL skills for teachers included the Self-Rated Emotional Intelligence Scale (SREIS), the Teacher SEL Beliefs Scale, and the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The measures of teacher-student relationships were rated using the Student-Teacher Relationships Scale–Short Form (STRS-SF).

Findings from the measurement instruments indicated that teachers' perspectives of emotional competence, comfort in implementing SEL skills, and perceived teaching ability could influence teacher-student relationships in the classroom (Poulou, 2016). A comparable mixed methods study by Zinsser et al. (2015) argued that teachers who are more emotionally competent might experience more success in the classroom, and better perceive the influence they are having on student's SEL, which further promotes their perspective of the value of teaching SEL skills to students. In addition to observing teachers' perspectives of emotional competence, Zinsser et al. researched emotionally supportive classroom practices. Their results showed that teachers who exhibited great

emotional support had similar beliefs with those who exhibited moderate emotional support concerning their definition of emotional competence and purposeful expression of emotions in the classroom.

Poulou (2016) and Zinsser et al. (2015) shared similar perspectives about teacher's SEL competence and how classroom practices, self-efficacy, and perceived competence implementing SEL could significantly affect student interactions and program application. Zinsser et al. believed that all skilled teachers could use their emotional expressions to promote student's engagement and enjoyment of SEL. They were proving that the identification of direct and indirect influences of teachers' SEL competencies on classroom relationships could be crucial to increasing a positive contribution toward effectively employing SEL programs. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the importance of how teacher attitudes influence willingness to accept, readily disseminate, and modify the programs based on beliefs (Collie et al., 2015), perceived competence (Poulou, 2016), and teaching experiences (Humphries et al., 2018) regarding the implementation of SEL programs. The research analysis supports the need for the current study to understand the influence of teacher's perspectives on SEL application at IB elementary schools.

Challenges and Benefits of SEL Program Implementation

Teachers often face challenges that could affect the application process and delivery outcomes of SEL programs at elementary schools. Anyon et al. (2016) documented consistent challenges with SEL implementation fidelity and argued that school social workers and relevant staff members should be engaged in efforts to improve

program integrity. The study conducted by Anyon et al. examined the contextual

influences on the application of an SEL intervention, including 35 teachers, three

principals, three behavior specialists, and three social worker interns. A focus group

protocol was created to describe factors that constrain or enable SEL application at the

school/administrative, classroom, teacher, and student level. Qualitative findings revealed

that the SEL program had challenges integrating into the existing school structure. It also

proved ineffective in adapting to specific SEL needs and lacked in technical assistance.

Anyon et al. concluded that there were constant challenges with implementation fidelity

due to inconsistent buy-in, the adaptability of the intervention to local priorities, and

compatibility with stakeholders' belief systems.

The findings of Anyon et al. (2016) are supported by the outcomes of similar

research led by Evans et al. (2015) on sporadic and inconsistent execution, which pose

significant challenges for effective application of SEL programs in elementary schools.

Evans et al. stressed a similar perspective and purpose as Anyon et al. as both agreed on

the need to examine the challenges of SEL programs and the effects of implementation

fidelity in elementary schools. Evans et al. conducted a series of semistructured

interviews with 15 SEL stakeholders regarding the use of Rogers' (2003) diffusion phases

to support its SEL application process in the classroom. The data from Evans et al.

revealed that the concept of reinvention was most useful as teachers delivered SEL

interventions while identifying key moments when execution problems could arise.

While reinvention may represent positive results (Evans et al., 2015), the need for

effective implementation and delivery of SEL content makes it necessary to include

teachers' perspectives about the challenges they may face (Anyon et al., 2016). Comparatively, Evans et al. noted that despite teachers reporting that they often received support and training with programming and application of the SEL curriculum, they still faced challenges in the classroom.

Although SEL programming in elementary schools may present challenges, there are benefits to implementing similar programs more effectively. After three years of employing an SEL program called Social Harmony, authors (Haymovitz et al., 2018) conducted a study that involved 32 students, faculty, and parents in a community based, concept mapping procedure to articulate perceived benefits of the program. A concept mapping evaluation approach was used to collect data to explore the participants' perspectives of their values and influences on SEL implementation. After the execution of Social Harmony, study participants consistently reported that they observed more preparedness and self-efficacy of faculty and staff members which enabled them to identify and address SEL concerns, improved relationships, more positive perspectives of self and others, and better school climate (Haymovitz et al., 2018).

Martinsone (2016) shared similar views regarding the benefits of effectively implementing SEL programs in elementary schools, but the study differed in focus and approach on sustainability and cultural relevance. The individuals in this study included 630 teachers who participated in a self-reflected experience illustrated through the perspective of the program's sample activities. The result of this program application revealed that SEL principles became a common approach for the entire school, as teachers became well versed on SEL issues when they received the necessary materials

for conducting class lessons at each level. This study also provided regular teacher supervisions as well as regional supervisors who were trained to sustain teacher's pedagogical practice (Martinsone, 2016). Despite the different approaches of Haymovitz et al. and Martinsone, they agreed that implementing SEL at an elementary school will require all stakeholders to promote program sustainability to improve effectiveness. Therefore, teachers' perceived challenges and identifiable benefits of employing an SEL program are necessary to include in this study, which is designed to determine the effectiveness of SEL application at an IB elementary school.

Effectiveness of SEL programs

In addition to teachers' perspectives about implementing an SEL program, other factors can also influence the overall effectiveness of a program. Humphrey et al. (2018) examined a comprehensive set of individual and organizational factors as potential predictors of how effectively teachers employed an SEL program called Promoting Alternative THinking (PATHS) Curriculum in an urban, Midwestern school district. In the first year of a major randomized controlled trial, the application of PATHS was examined in 69 classrooms across 23 schools. Classroom level, structured observations generated implementation data along with an exploratory factor analysis of observer ratings. The findings from the study suggested that teachers' perceived receptive attitudes towards the program, their efficacy, and their perspectives of administrative support for the program were significant predictors of program success (Humphrey et al., 2018). Study participants reported that they observed increased self-efficacy of faculty and staff members to identify and address social emotional concerns. Teachers were also more

prepared to employ SEL curriculum, had better relationships with other teachers, and more positive perspectives of self and others which improved school climate.

The perceived influences on the effectiveness of an SEL program conducted by (Humphrey et al., 2018) are in agreement with others in the field (Malloy et al., 2015) who shared a similar purpose in exploring factors that could affect SEL program effectiveness. Malloy et al. evaluated the influence of teachers' perspectives on three dimensions of school organizational climate on the quantity and quality of teacher implementation of an SEL program. The dimensions measured were teachers' perceptions of (a) the school's openness to innovation, (b) the extent to which schools utilize participatory decision-making practices, and (c) the existence of supportive relationships among teachers (Malloy et al., 2015). Data from 46 teachers in seven public elementary schools measured their perspectives regarding the school's openness to innovating an SEL program, the extent to which the school used participatory decision-making practices, and the existence of supportive relationships among teachers. The findings suggest that perspectives of a school's organizational climate influence teachers' implementation of SEL programs, have implications for school administrators, and require technical assistance providers to effectively execute and sustain programs in schools (Malloy et al., 2015).

Although the findings of Malloy et al. (2015) and Humphrey et al. (2018) differ, they stress the need to analyze a teacher's perspectives on the effectiveness of an SEL program along with organizational elements and professional competences. Malloy et al. and Humphrey et al. agreed that organizational climate had been proposed as a factor that

might influence a school's readiness to employ a schoolwide SEL program effectively.

The school and classroom environment can determine program success based on how

teachers administer SEL programs. Therefore, stakeholders should consider all the factors

and elements that play a role in determining the effectiveness of implementing an SEL

program in elementary schools. Program effectiveness can be a critical component in

determining how successful SEL programs could be at IB elementary schools.

Implementation Strategies and Approaches

Research based instructional strategies and approaches are necessary for teachers

to implement an SEL program effectively in their classrooms. Paracha et al. (2019)

conducted a study in which they evaluated teacher's ability to leverage the Participatory

Design (PD) and Design Thinking (DT) strategies to promote creative ideas that students

can use to boost their creative confidence while developing SEL skills. The DT approach

allows students to generate their understanding of SEL skills through drawing, hands-on

projects, and active problem solving. The PD strategy is a collaborative working

approach in which participants can influence the SEL design decisions. Teachers

administered a PD and DT workshop to 30 students and collected data through

Classroom Discussion Forums (CDFs) and questionnaires (Paracha et al., 2019).

Fictional inquiry (brainstorming activities) and comic boarding activities were designed

to encourage a free flow of ideas and the creation of comic strips to practice specific SEL

skills (Paracha et al., 2019). As a result of teachers implementing the two instructional

strategies in the elementary classroom, students made valuable SEL design contributions,

their ethical reasoning was stimulated, and students' creative confidence and development of SEL skills were boosted (Paracha et al., 2019).

Sugishita and Dresser (2019) examined elementary school teachers who practiced using SEL supportive instructional strategies similar to the instructional approaches of Paracha et al. (2019). Twelve preservice teachers (PSTs) practiced using SEL strategies that supported active engagement in learning, equitable access to instruction, diversity and differentiated strategies, and learner-centered classroom discipline. The findings from the Sugishita and Dresser coincided with the findings of Paracha et al., which showed that teachers who applied research based SEL strategies noticed benefits including improved academics, few behavior problems, and reduced emotional challenges. Pairing the DT and PD approaches (Paracha et al., 2019) with SEL supportive instructional strategies (Sugishita & Dresser, 2019) could increase SEL program application effectiveness of SEL program. Therefore, providing teachers with research based instructional strategies and approaches which could be beneficial for implementing SEL programs in IB public APSD elementary schools is necessary.

Implications

The extent of the literature on pedagogical approaches regarding SEL revealed the existence of several themes, such as SEL implementation, SEL programming, teacher perspectives of implementing SEL, implementation strategies, and approaches to learning. Teacher perspectives about the challenges they face and the resources and supports they receive can affect the process of employing an SEL curriculum. Strategies for improving SEL implementation program outcomes are effective once teachers'

perspectives about the challenges they face have been addressed. Practical resources and supports are needed to strengthen SEL curriculum application for teachers at an IB PYP public elementary school.

Given the influence of the SEL curriculum and materials that teachers must administer, research and collaboration become vital in determining the methods for how to deliver the content effectively. The need for professional development and resources to improve pedagogy holds promise as a means for limiting the challenges that teachers may face while implementing the SEL curriculum. SEL interventions may be essential for elementary schools and may have positive outcomes for learners; however, teachers often receive little to no training on how to execute these programs with fidelity (Humphries et al., 2018). Also, teachers' attitudes towards the SEL program are essential in determining what support and resources they will need to effectively deliver the curriculum. Collaboration from all teacher stakeholders throughout the process of executing an SEL curriculum will determine the specific professional development or training that teachers will need.

A professional development plan resulting from the study would be developed for implementing an SEL curriculum and presented to the teachers, staff, and SEL stakeholders within the school community. The training curriculum and materials would be tailored towards the needs of the teachers and then the needs of the whole school. All SEL stakeholders can refer to this project study to assist in making decisions about the quality implementation of the SEL program at the local site. In IB PYP public elementary

schools worldwide, many employ SEL curriculum programs could benefit from this study's findings.

Summary

The literature analysis was conducted to identify peer reviewed articles that could expound on the teachers' perspectives when implementing evidence based SEL instruction in IB elementary schools. Section 1 provides the problem, local problem, rationale, definitions, significance, research questions, review of literature, conceptual framework, and implications for the study. The methodology, research design and approach, participants, researcher-participant relationship, data collection, role of the researcher, data analysis results, and limitations are explained in Section 2.

Section 2: The Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perspectives of their implementation of an SEL curriculum at an IB elementary school. The methodology was designed to conduct a qualitative study of elementary school teachers who execute the Second Step SEL Program at Woodward International Baccalaureate Elementary School (pseudonym) through schoolwide practices. The qualitative study sought to discover and to describe what people do specifically in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them (Erickson, 2011). The descriptive data were collected by conducting semistructured, open-ended, audiotaped interviews of 15 teachers who share a common interest, experience, or face challenges with the research topic. The homeroom teachers described their perspectives on the SEL implementation process through interviews, which helped to understand the research question:

What are PK-5 teachers' perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school?

This section describes the research design and approach, participants, strategies for data collection, a plan for data analysis, and limitations.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

In the literature on qualitative research, terms such as generic or basic are used to define methodologies that have no guiding set of philosophical assumptions (Caelli et al., 2003). The core qualities of a generic qualitative research study are those that epitomize the characteristics of research which seeks to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved (Merriam, 2002).

Advocates of generic or basic qualitative approaches have expressed the need for

innovation and adaptation in methodologies to fit the researcher, the discipline, and the

questions proposed, outweigh the difficulties in conducting other established qualitative

methodologies (Kahlke, 2014). Kahlke recommended using a generic qualitative method

to understand the need to employ many perspectives before achieving a deep

understanding of social phenomena, which served as the basis for this study's research

design.

      Educational research designs can be qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods

with several approaches that provide specific direction. A quantitative design would not

be the appropriate approach because this study is not about quantity, amount, intensity,

frequency, or the testing of theories. A mixed methods design does not align as this study

includes a quantitative component that is unnecessary for examining teachers'

perspectives and experiences. After careful consideration, I decided that this study's

research design should be aligned with the qualitative approach, which is the best choice

for researchers seeking to determine participants' experiences at a particular point in time

and a particular context (Merriam, 2002). More specifically, a generic qualitative design

method is intended to offer an opportunity for researchers to use the tools that established

methodologies offer, and develop research designs that fit their epistemological stance,

discipline, and particular research questions (Kahlke, 2014).

Participants

      The subject selection in qualitative research is purposeful and one of the essential

tasks in the study design phase. The strategy for selecting participants was purposive to

ensure representation of important elements of the research question (Sargeant, 2012).

The rationale for employing a purposive sampling strategy is that the researcher assumes

that specific categories of individuals may have a unique, different, or essential

perspective on the phenomenon in question, and their presence in the sample should be

ensured (Mason, 2002). The population that was recruited for this study included 35

teachers involved in implementing an SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary

school. A purposeful sampling strategy was used to select 15 teachers that are intended to

achieve a depth of understanding with an emphasis on data saturation. Data saturation is

the point at which analysis begins to reveal repetition and redundancy (Thomas, 2017).

Data saturation was achieved when 15 study participants revealed reoccurring

experiences and perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program at an IB

PYP public elementary school.

     IB PYP public elementary school teachers from an ASPD elementary school were

selected based on the following criteria: (a) PK-5th grade teachers; and (b) those teachers

who have implemented the Second Step SEL program through schoolwide practices.

With the principal's approval of access to staff and use of premises at the IB PYP public

elementary school, an invitation was sent out to asking teachers from grades PK-5 who

have taught the Second Step program SEL for at least one schoolyear if they would be

study participants. Teachers from different grade levels were selected to fulfill the sample

size, and no additional teachers were denied participation in the study. The potential

study participants were solicited via school or personal email address, which included an

invitation to participate in a voluntary interview and a consent form indicating that they

could opt out at any time. Participants were expected to complete one interview via Zoom

of approximately one hour to discuss the topic of implementing SEL curriculum at IB

PYP public elementary school. Table 1 includes (a) participants, (b) grade levels they

teach, (c) years of teaching experience, and (d) years of implementing SEL.

Table 1

*Participants, Grade Level, Years of Teaching Experience, and Years of Implementing
SEL*

Participant	Grade	Experience	Implementing
Participant 1	5	9	4
Participant 2	3	9	4
Participant 3	3	17	4
Participant 4	1	21	4
Participant 5	K	20	4
Participant 6	PK	7	4
Participant 7	3	29	4
Participant 8	4	21	4
Participant 9	5	20	6
Participant 10	5	19	4
Participant 11	4	19	4
Participant 12	4	28	4
Participant 13	2	23	7
Participant 14	K	9	9
Participant 15	1	27	4

Researcher-Participant Relationship

My role as the researcher served as the key instrument throughout the qualitative

data collection process of interviews and analysis. I currently teach at the local site where

the study was conducted, and my relationship with some of the potential participants

includes being on the same school committees and teams, working on similar grade

levels, and partnering together in the local school community. As the primary instrument

of data collection, I had an intimate relationship with the setting, participants, and data analysis, which yielded a duality of the researcher's presence in a study as both a participant and an observer in varying degrees (Creswell, 2013). To mitigate influence, I engaged in reflexivity to remain aware of the dual role as a teacher and researcher, establishing credibility with the study participants. I established a working relationship by giving participants a voice to share their experiences and perspectives without judgment or bias, which translated into a respectful and engaging interview process. To maintain a working relationship with participants, researchers must establish rapport, build trust, provide reciprocity for research participants, engage in ongoing interactions in the research site over time, and member checking; researchers engage in self-awareness, reflexivity, and interactivity throughout the research (Given, 2008).

Participant Protection

The protection of participants in any research study is imperative as harm can be prevented or reduced by applying appropriate ethical principles (Orb et al., 2001). To protect the participants' rights in this study, several strategies were used. An ethics review and approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was required before participant recruitment along with online ethics training completed by the researcher [approval number: 12-15-20-0338848]. Potential participants received invitations through an introductory e-mail via personal or school e-mail address that described the nature of the study, my background and interests, the recruitment process, and steps to ensure ethical protection and confidentiality on a consent form. Informed consent, respecting confidentiality, and remaining consciously aware of my role as a

teacher researcher minimized potential risks involved. Participants were made aware that they can drop out at any time or refuse to answer any particular question. Through informed consent, the researcher ensured that the participants understood the nature of the research, were aware of risks the study may pose, and were not forced either covertly or overtly to participate (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Consent forms and data were locked in a file cabinet along with a password protected, external hard drive for any electronic data. The file cabinet is located at the IB PYP public elementary school, with the researcher and principal having the only key protected access. All data will be destroyed after five years to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Pseudonyms were used to maintain the confidentiality of the school and faculty members to protect their identity and ensure that their responses do not easily identify participants. The researcher-participant relationship may raise a range of ethical concerns including anonymity; however, a balanced research relationship encouraged disclosure, trust, and awareness of potential ethical issues (Orb et al., 2001). My relationship with the school and teacher participants is that I am employed at the study site, and some of the participants are trusting colleagues. To counter potential peer pressure, a reflexive approach provided more effective and impartial analysis, which involved examining and acknowledging the assumptions and preconceptions that I may have brought to the research study. Confidentiality and informed consent are ethical considerations that were used to guide the research and maintain the rights of study participants.

Data Collection

This study's data were collected by conducting semistructured, audiotaped interviews with each participant, which is appropriate for conducting qualitative research interviews. After gaining principal approval to conduct research and receiving electronic consent from all participants, each interview occurred virtually via Zoom. An interview protocol was designed with guiding questions to help the participant discuss the phenomenon in detail (see Appendix B). Nine open-ended questions were asked of the study participants within an approximately 60-minute time frame to elicit descriptions of teachers' perspectives and experiences with implementing an SEL program. The interviews were recorded to ensure data integrity and validity regarding teachers' perspectives on implementing the SEL program.

Individual interviews were designed to engage each participant in the conversation about implementing the Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school. The homeroom teachers were asked about resources, supports, and challenges they have experienced during the process of implementation. Immediately following each audiotaped interview, data were transcribed using the Zoom audio transcript software to closely examine an accurate representation of each participants' words and meaning. Audio recordings, audio transcriptions, and additional notes were saved on a password protected computer and backed up on a password protected external hard drive in digital folders with alphanumeric file codes. Each transcript was examined more than once to check for accuracy and sent as an attachment via e-mail to each participant as a request to review the transcript for accurateness and establish credibility.

Member checking and triangulation strategies were used to verify participant responses. An opportunity was provided for participants to review the data and give feedback on how well the findings correspond to their SEL implementation experiences. None of the participants requested changes in their transcripts. To keep track of research data and emerging understandings, a research log was kept as a part of the reflective process to notate any changes, additions, or modifications to the data collection plan, research design, analysis methods, and processes (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Keeping a research log allowed me to take notes of thoughts and ideas as part of the data collection's reflective process.

Data Analysis

Immediately following each interview, I transcribed the audio recordings by using the Zoom audio transcription to reread each interview to ensure a verbatim record. Interview data were grouped and categorized with Dedoose transcription analysis software to assist in identifying repeated terms or codes (Linneberg & Korsgaar, 2019). Dedoose is a tool kit that can make qualitative data analysis more efficient and help researchers organize, analyze, and find qualitative data insights (Zhao et al., 2016). Participants' responses were manually highlighted, underlined, and analyzed to recognize similarities, differences, and discover patterns. Next, codes concerning that derived from the data were recorded to formulate a detailed story. Discerning the patterns for coding was a way to solidify the observations into concrete instances of meaning and deep reflection on human experience's emergent patterns and meanings (Saldaña, 2015). The

interview data and selected codes were reviewed several times to increase the interview

questions' validity and responses.

Coding

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine homeroom teachers'

perceptions about implementing an SEL program in the classroom at a PK-5 IB PYP

public elementary school. A specific data set was organized around the research

questions and interview questions using Dedoose, a web based qualitative analysis

application (Zhao et al., 2016). Each transcript was reviewed line by line to search for

and highlight words, short phrases, and groups of sentences that contained references

related to the research and guiding questions. Patterns in the data were recognized, and

parent codes were created and color coded to attribute to the data set and creation of

categories based on the interview questions. Some of the parent codes included:

addressing challenges, available resources, implementation challenges, ongoing training,

required structure, and SEL supports.

A second and third coding cycle was conducted and coded different colors to look

for additional patterns and relationships supported by the data. Additional codes were

created under each parent code to filter and focus the data's salient features for generating

more common themes. Reoccurring participants' responses were combined throughout

the coding process to determine interconnectedness and formulate themes for cohesive

understanding. Categories were also constructed to represent the patterns of participants'

experiences, which transcended into specific themes. After a thorough qualitative data

analysis on the constructed categories and themes, the findings were represented by using

detailed explanations as each theme is discussed one at a time to show how intricately the data interrelates. The coding process resulted in the development of five themes as key findings which align with the research question.

Evidence of Quality Findings

The evidence of quality in research must consider specific indicators to demonstrate that findings accurately represent the subject, phenomenon, or process being studied as failure to meet quality standards may result in misleading or inaccurate data (Burkholder et al., 2016). To ensure accuracy of interview records, all transcriptions were double checked, notes were taken to clarify muddled responses, and interviewees were asked to review transcripts. The credibility of the findings was based on interviewees who are knowledgeable of SEL and ensured that they are talking from experience and accurately remember the events or processes involving SEL (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Several strategies were used to establish accurate and credible findings, including triangulation or using more than one source to verify the basis of a claim, member checking or respondent validation, and peer debriefing (Burkholder et al., 2016). There is doubt that research can be entirely objective or free from bias; however, the researcher's task is to be conscious of biases and reduce how they might affect the study (Lambert, 2012). To achieve or mitigate the threats to validity, the researcher must pay attention to and include disconfirming evidence, referred to as negative cases or discrepant data (Booth et al., 2013).

Data Analysis Results

Interview Findings and Themes

This study explored the research question What are PK-5 teachers' perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school? Semistructured interviews were the data collection method used with 15 homeroom teachers. As a result of the data analysis, key findings emerged from the patterns and relationships, which were organized based on clustering similar participant responses using codes. In Table 2, several codes were presented to show how five themes emerged based on conceptually related responses to support the qualitative data and research question.

Required Structure

A theme that surfaced is the homeroom teachers' understanding of the required structure to deliver SEL instruction was incomplete. This theme is related to the research question because it concentrated on PK-5 teachers' opinions about the required structure, which may have influenced how they implemented the Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school. Ten participants stated the school administration allotted a designated time in the schedule for teachers to implement SEL instruction daily. According to five participants, the expectation was to teach SEL after the morning announcements; however, not all homeroom teachers stated that they taught SEL instruction daily or follow the allotted schedule. The participants perceived that the school administration wanted them to implement SEL daily, being that time was built into the daily schedule for each grade level. Participant 10 taught SEL two or three times

a week, Participant 11 taught most days of the week, and Participant 14 taught SEL once

a week. Participant 3 ends the school day with SEL instruction due to a schedule conflict

with Specials after the morning announcements, while Participant 13 taught SEL at the

beginning or end of the day. Participant 13 shared that there are times when SEL

instruction should be taught, but it is not. Participant 12 added that the administration told

teachers to implement SEL instruction but did not check-in or follow-up with teachers to

ensure that it is being taught. Participant 11 expressed that although the requirement to

implement SEL is in the morning, teachers should try to weave SEL throughout the

instructional day.

When asked about the required structure for implementing the SEL curriculum,

all participants indicated that they were provided with a Second Step Kit, a manual or

guide with scripted lessons for each week, and an online dashboard to digitally display

lessons. Any teachers who taught grades PK-2 expressed that they were provided with

puppets or emotion cards in their kits that go with some of the lessons. Eleven homeroom

teachers shared similar perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program

through the setting of a morning meeting or community gathering. Participant 13

described the morning meeting as a time when students gather on the carpet, begin with a

greeting, discuss the lesson or topic, and conclude with a reflection. According to

Participant 11, there were songs or videos that go with each lesson for students to watch

and discuss concerning the SEL topic for the day or week. Participant 10 added that there

were specific activities and skits that get students involved in the SEL lesson topic.

Participant 6 commented that "the curriculum may not call for it, but they are engaged

better when they are involved" and "acting out, or modeling is necessary." Participants 8 and 11 agreed that it was necessary to continue to implement or refer to the SEL curriculum throughout the day. This group of participants recognized a required structure for implementing SEL daily but still face challenges with delivery.

Lack of Training

Participants were asked about their SEL experiences and the training they have participated in regarding the SEL curriculum. The Second Step program was introduced to the school during the 2015-2016 school year, with seven of the participants being a part of the initial rollout. In recounting homeroom teachers' SEL training experiences, nine participants recalled an initial training about the Second Step program that was presented by the APSD, and five participants remembered an online training for the Child Protection Unit (CPU). Participant 2 recalled a lady from the district's SEL department delivering the program introduction to the school. Two teachers shared previous experiences with SEL, including training at new teacher orientation and Responsive Classroom training. Some teachers could not recall any SEL training, while participants 8, 11, and 13 remembered only being introduced to the Second Step program but did not recall being in actual training about how to use the curriculum.

Participants 11 and 12 agreed that the SEL training was minimal regarding curriculum delivery. Both teachers shared similar experiences and reported that they were introduced to the curriculum, shown how to use the digital platform, but not taught how to fully implement it. Participant 6 revealed that "there was no SEL training beyond the initial introduction and adoption of the Second Step program." As a result, lack of teacher

training about how to implement the SEL curriculum developed as an additional theme.

This theme is related to the research question because it focused on PK-5 teachers'

perceptions about the trainings they have received to implement the SEL program.

Participants shared several responses about SEL training, and the majority have been to at

least one. Due to the limited training on implementing and addressing challenges with the

SEL curriculum, homeroom teachers need professional development to support areas of

need.

Resources and Support

One of the themes that emerged from the research question was that the

homeroom teachers have adequate resources and support to implement the SEL

curriculum. This theme is related to the research question because it addressed PK-5

teachers' perspectives about the resources and support they receive to implement the

Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school. Eleven participants

reported that they have ample resources to implement SEL in the classroom. A Second

Step kit and an online dashboard were provided for each homeroom teacher along with an

SEL book of the month. The APSD provided an SEL book of the month for homeroom

teachers to use as a supplement with Second Step program. The program kit included a

teacher's manual and posters for all grade levels and emotion cards and puppets for

grades PK – 2. Participant 6 has an additional kit specifically for grade PK that is

different from other grade levels. According to Participants 5, 6, 9, and 10, the online

platform included a teacher dashboard with lessons, songs, digital posters, videos, and

home links, including SEL handouts in English and Spanish to send home to parents.

Teachers also expressed that they used additional resources like Brainpop SEL videos, IB attitudes and the learner profile, Class Dojo videos, real-life experiences, Mind Yeti, and trade books to align with the SEL curriculum. Two participants shared similar perspectives about how teaching SEL could supplement the health curriculum, which also must be taught.

Participants were asked how SEL instruction is supported at their school. Six homeroom teachers described the guidance counselor as being the primary support for SEL. Participant 10 stated that the counselor ensured that teachers have available resources to implement SEL instruction, and Participant 14 specified that the counselor had met with homeroom classes from time to time to supplement the Second Step program. Participant 7 added that the counselor sends weekly or monthly updates about SEL, IB connections to SEL, and what teachers should be implementing. In addition, Participants 8 and 11 agreed that SEL is being supported through the morning announcements, while participants 6 and 14 feel supported by their grade level team members. Participant 6 stated that her team has access to additional support through the Pre-K office if teachers request it. Participant 13 added that "overall, the administration supports SEL by creating time in each grade level's schedule for teachers to implement daily." Although participants faced challenges with implementing SEL, teachers expressed various resources and support to implement the Second Step program.

Modifications

According to participants in the study, they faced challenges while implementing the Second Step SEL program. Ten of the 15 participants reported that the Second Step

program's CPU was the most challenging to implement. Five homeroom teachers stated

that they felt "uncomfortable" teaching students the content within the CPU, specifically

private body parts. Participant 11 explained that it was "awkward" to teach about private

body parts, while Participant 8 described having to "muster up the courage" to teach.

Participant 5 was "leery" of teaching CPU lessons, and Participant 2 struggled to deliver

some of the curriculum based around appropriate and inappropriate situations and

touching. Similarly, participant 3 added that "discussing the body parts can be

challenging because it is a sensitive topic."

Some of the CPU content was considered "juvenile" for the students as Participant

10 explained that she wanted access to more age-appropriate material. Participant 10

recounted her experience of teaching students about a "no-no square" and how

uncomfortable it was to teach that lesson. Three teachers used the term "overgeneralized"

to describe students' responses to some of the private body parts content. Participant 13

shared an experience from one of the CPU lessons when students learned about good

touches vs. bad touches. Their grandfather was touching the child in the lesson.

Participant 13 noted students' reactions and worried that they would overgeneralize the

content, including some students thinking that it was an inappropriate touch when their

grandfather poked or tickled them.

There were additional Second Step program implementation challenges that

homeroom teachers shared including:

- time to implement,
- teaching abstract concepts like empathy,

- trouble sticking to the curriculum script,

- teaching second language learners the SEL curriculum,

- managing students who may share similar experiences described within the CPU curriculum, and

- lingering questions and reactions that students have about the CPU topics.

Although there is time allotted in the participants daily schedule, four participants still have trouble "fitting SEL in," "struggle to hit SEL every day," "SEL gets taken over by another subject," or "the hardest part is just making sure to fit SEL into the day amidst all the other things." When participants are implementing the SEL curriculum, some tend to deviate from the script that is provided. Four participants shared similar perspectives, including picking and choosing what to eliminate or skip from the script, skimming through lessons, or modifying lessons based on classroom or individual student needs. In addition, participants described implementation challenges with teaching abstract concepts. For example, participant 4 described, "It is difficult to teach empathy. You can practice it, and you can show it, but to explain it as hard and a lot of the time, I will assume the kids will know what is going on." Participants made modifications when implementing SEL based on the challenges they faced and classroom needs using the resources, supports, and previous training provided.

Homeroom teachers shared their perspectives on how they address SEL implementation challenges in the classroom. Teaching second language learners the SEL curriculum was addressed by two participants who described their experiences with teaching and sending home SEL memos in English and Spanish. The application of the

CPU was a reoccurring challenge for many participants. Two teachers agreed that teaching the CPU is "important" because students may not be receiving this information from conversations at home. Participant 13 stated that "teachers should take teaching the CPU seriously as it would not be included if there was no problem in society today." To address some of the implementation challenges of the CPU in the classroom, teachers shared modifications to the SEL curriculum including, improvising the script, incorporating real-life experiences to make the information relatable to students, picking and choosing what to teach, shortening or skipping over lessons, and setting the tone or having conversations before teaching content. Four teachers specified that they would rather have the guidance counselor administer CPU lessons, with one stating that "the homeroom teacher is not best equipped to deliver the content." Although parents' consent to having their child's homeroom teacher implement the CPU, some homeroom teachers agreed that parents should have more conversations at home about what students are learning in school to minimize the uncomfortable feeling of teaching and learning the CPU curriculum.

Nine of the participants in the study shared ideas for adding or removing components of the SEL curriculum. Participants 1 and 2 agreed that some of the SEL songs and lesson content were "too youthful," "seem a bit silly," or not entirely appropriate for the age group. Participant 7 would like to see more culturally relevant content that reaches more than one ethnicity. Participant 4 explained the program is too scripted and the CPU should be removed. Participants 8, 9, and 10 said that the curriculum "needs to be refreshed," is "lacking in terms of everyday issues that may

come up in the classroom," "some of it is dated and the students do not always relate,"

and "add more content to make it current." Participant 13 would like more for the

curriculum to include more literature or trade books to provide examples of what is being

taught, while Participant 6 preferred more emotion cards to complement the SEL lessons.

As a result, modifications for SEL curriculum delivery emerged as a theme related to the

research question because it focused on PK-5 teachers' perspectives about addressing

challenges and making changes while implementing the Second Step SEL program.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Eleven of the study participants shared ideas about professional learning

opportunities or trainings that could address SEL implementation challenges and

concerns. Two teachers desired to have SEL trainings that are "personalized" or "grade

level specific." Participants 11 and 14 would like for APSD to provide teachers with

more SEL workshops for teachers and not just workshops for core content areas. Most of

the trainings were specific to grade bands K-2 and 3-5, but Kathy suggested a separation

of grade levels for any SEL trainings. Participant 12 recommended, "at least a workshop

going through the Child Protection Unit with teachers and every teacher needs to be held

accountable." Participant 10 added that if homeroom teachers have to implement CPU,

they need to feel comfortable delivering it. Additional training and professional learning

opportunities that homeroom teachers recommended included a staff level conference,

modeling CPU lessons, conversations about potential classroom scenarios, what to do

and how to handle mature and immature students, open discussions or forums, and

fidelity check-ins. Professional learning opportunities developed as a theme as

participants shared the importance of ongoing training. This theme is related to the research question because it addressed PK-5 teachers' perspectives about potential professional learning opportunities regarding the implementation of the Second Step SEL program.

Several conclusions can be drawn as a result of five themes that emerged from the data collection. One conclusion is that teachers faced several challenges implementing the SEL program. Teachers understood the required structure to teach SEL, but time to implement and trouble sticking to the curriculum script were challenges they faced. Other challenges included teaching abstract concepts, teaching English language learners (ELLs) the SEL curriculum, managing students who may share similar experiences described within the CPU curriculum, and addressing lingering questions and reactions that students have regarding the CPU topics. Teachers shared that they have ample resources and support to implement the Second Step program. Teachers shared ideas for modifications to the SEL program, including adding culturally relevant content, removing the CPU, including more literature or trade books, and incorporating more current everyday issues. Based on participants' responses about how they address SEL implementation challenges in the classroom, I concluded that teachers might need professional development or training of curriculum and materials to decide on necessary modifications to the SEL program. To improve SEL program implementation, professional development is necessary to help bridge facilitation gaps, share perspectives, and make the SEL curriculum relevant and adaptable to current events in an ever-changing world.

Table 2

Codes and Themes to Research Question

Codes	Themes	RQ
Expected to teach SEL daily Allotted time in daily schedule Expected after morning announcements Follow scripted lessons Administration created SEL schedule Community gathering format Teach throughout the day	Required Structure	RQ: What are PK-5 teachers' perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school?
Initial district training Online CPU training No curriculum training Minimal training New teacher orientation on SEL No recollection of SEL training	Lack of Training	
Guidance counselor Weekly updates Second Step kit and online dashboard Videos, posters, puppets, and home links SEL Book of the month IB attitudes and learner profile Access to materials Brainpop, Class Dojo SEL videos Real-life experiences Connection to health curriculum Grade level team members District SEL website Special area teachers Morning announcements	Resources and Support	
Culturally relevant curriculum Current events Emotion cards Eliminate, skim, combine lessons Scripted lessons Incorporate a daily check-in Grade and age-appropriate content Update activities Literature and trade books	Modifications	
CPU workshop (teacher accountability) Conversations (open discussions/forums) Check-ins Staff level conference (exposure to different SEL philosophies and thought processes) Individual or grade specific District opportunities (not just core subject trainings	Professional Learning Opportunities	

Discrepant Cases

Slight discrepancies in the data were identified when homeroom teachers were asked about SEL implementation regarding the Second Step program. Since the 2020-2021 school year has been virtual teaching, the APSD condensed the Second Step program lessons in Google Drive for homeroom teachers to follow weekly. The digital lessons follow the Second Step lessons' model and format but may include information about the APSD book of the month, current news, and mindfulness activities. Although the digital lessons were provided for homeroom teachers to implement to the SEL curriculum during virtual instruction, participants' limited responses did not receive a code as the discrepancies did not align with the common themes. Through peer debriefing and member checking, two teachers described some variance in their SEL delivery as Participant 10 "preferred" and Participant 2 "would rather teach" the condensed Second Step lessons from the APSD. Jasmine described the digital lessons as "easier to implement" and "understandable." During member checks, participants reviewed responses, and no additional interviews and edits were needed.

Evidence of Quality

To ensure quality throughout the study, I recorded notes about my own perceptions, reactions, and reflections during and after each interview to check for any biases I may have had while conducting each interview. I also carefully read my notes and compared them to each transcriptions. To address the accuracy of interview data, I conducted member checks and peer debriefing so that each participant could verify that the transcript was accurate (Creswell, 2016). To establish credibility, participants of the

study were invited to validate responses and make changes for clarification to their transcripts if necessary. Through peer debriefing, all participants accepted transcripts as written and made no changes.

Summary of Outcomes

This qualitative study's outcomes are evident throughout the process of data collection, methods of quality, the findings, and themes concerning the problem and research question. The study addressed the problem that PK-5 IB elementary school homeroom teachers have difficulty implementing the SEL Second Step program. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of PK-5 homeroom teachers about the implementation of an SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school. The study results answered the research question with findings indicating that participants have the necessary resources and support to implement the SEL program. Teachers also faced challenges implementing the CPU content and expressed a desire for professional learning opportunities due to minimal initial training.

The conceptual framework that supported the study's outcomes is Rogers' theory of diffusion and the diffusion of innovations model, sometimes called the innovation decision making process (IDMP). The study's research focused on the choices and actions an individual engages in over time to implement and adopt an innovation. Rogers' (2003) IDMP model included five stages emulated by several homeroom teachers in the study. They transitioned from gaining initial knowledge about the SEL program, forming an attitude, deciding to accept or reject the program, implementing, and confirming the decision to implement the program. Rogers advocates for sustainability and the need for

reinvention to increase the likelihood of effective program execution (Fisher, 2005).

Analysis of the participant transcripts indicated compelling data in favor of Rogers'

theory of diffusion and the DOI model.

The body of literature regarding SEL implementation showed a link between SEL

programs and supports the need for effective execution. Findings from Bailey et al.

(2019) revealed that from teachers' perspectives, successful program implementation of

SEL curriculum is effective when teachers can apply strategies that reflect their own

experiences. In this study, the teachers cited well developed training, learning about

foundational research and guiding frameworks to adopt a strategy-based approach, and

facilitators modeling strategies to help enhance teacher capacity to implement SEL

effectively. According to Bailey et al., an approach to SEL programming should be

developmental, flexible, and responsive to local needs, focusing on strategies for teachers

to implement as appropriate, rather than a sequenced curriculum for them to follow. A

similar study that shows a point of connection between the study results was conducted

by Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin (2017), in which they identified teachers' perspectives

and experiences on executing SEL programs. The results of the study showed that

teachers had little to no experience with implementation. According to Esen-Aygun and

Sahin-Taskin, although teachers lacked experience, they considered SEL instruction an

essential part of their teaching responsibilities. Although teachers presented varying

levels of experience with implementing SEL programs, Esen-Aygun and Sahin-Taskin's

research supports the need to understand teachers' perspectives to improve SEL programs'

effectiveness.

Based on the findings of this study, teachers expressed a need for training or a professional learning opportunity. I concluded that a school's SEL program should include an effective training method for implementing the SEL program. Additionally, homeroom teachers will need ongoing training or professional learning opportunities to facilitate the Second Step SEL program issues and challenges effectively. Professional development is needed because participants were confident in their ability to teach the SEL content and had ample resources and support from the guidance counselor, but they still face challenges with incorporating the Second Step curriculum. The professional development project would be the most appropriate to address PK-5 teachers' perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program as the data show teachers receiving initial training and one CPU training. The project's goal would be to provide homeroom teachers with support with challenges they may face when executing the SEL program. Another goal of the project is to provide teachers with an understanding of evidence based SEL instruction. SEL implementation strategies will be identified along with best practices throughout the application of the project.

Section 3: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore PK-5 teachers' perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school. Study findings revealed a need for professional development or training regarding the challenges that teachers faced concerning SEL implementation. Homeroom teachers had expressed that they had only received an initial SEL training when the program was introduced to the school and one CPU training. The current study revealed that while attempting to implement the Second Step SEL program, participants realized that they needed assistance to expand their knowledge to execute and apply the program effectively. Data were collected from 15 homeroom teachers through semistructured interviews. Analysis of the data presented the following themes: (a) required structure, (b) lack of training, (c) modifications, (d) resources and support, and (e) professional learning opportunities. The development of a professional development opportunity addressed all of the themes revealed throughout the study and help reduce challenges associated with teachers' implementing SEL.

Rationale

In a Southeastern school district in the United States, the problem is that teachers have difficulty executing an SEL program in the classroom at a PK-5 IB PYP public elementary school. Since the Second Step program's launch in the 2015-2016 schoolyear, participants have only had two trainings. The findings from this study indicated that teachers had faced several challenges while implementing SEL and may need professional development, which would be the most appropriate project for this study.

This professional development will extend the SEL strategies and practices utilized by homeroom teachers at the IB PYP public school. The professional development project sessions will take place virtually.

The problem of the study will be addressed through the project's content to ensure homeroom teachers can implement the Second Step SEL program with fewer challenges. Teachers influence students daily, and the facilitation of the SEL curriculum and materials, including the CPU, is impacted by their ability to develop their SEL skills through continuous learning and self-reflection (Rubens et al., 2018). This project can also help teachers help themselves with their socioemotional health, which sometimes gets neglected (Schonert-Reicht, 2017). This professional development project can also help teachers increase their SEL knowledge and become better facilitators of the Second Step program. The project in Appendix A will be used for each training.

Review of Literature

This section includes current literature regarding professional learning opportunities and communities as effective ways to help homeroom teachers facilitate SEL components. A search was conducted using scholarly databases, including Ebscohost, ProQuest, Walden University Library, and ERIC. My search terms were professional development, teacher professional development, SEL best practices, and the Second Step program. The study findings reveal the need for homeroom teachers' support, including resources and best practices to implement SEL. A professional development is the most appropriate genre of project for this study as it will involve teachers as both learners and teachers, take place within the school day, are integrated

into practice, support teacher needs, cohere with school and system policies, and promote transformative practice, rather than accountability (Gore et al., 2017). A workshop presentation is the approach for homeroom teachers to benefit by fostering new skills and knowledge about SEL, learning proven behaviors and techniques, and changing or refining best practices. Teachers will engage in reflective and collaborative professional learning activities to support their learning and practices regarding SEL and the Second Step program.

Professional Development

School based professional development allows teachers to continue their education for free and is centered around specific content and instructional practices. The quality of targeted professional development increases as teachers implement acquired skills and strategies (Simonsen et al., 2017). Teachers expressed not having enough time to implement SEL and had varying perspectives of the required structure, so tailoring part of the professional development around these challenges will help address specific needs to employ best practices. McLennan et al. (2017) agreed that when professional development is tailored, it can improve the quality of the instruction by helping teachers adapt to the expanding role of an educator in a supportive, optimistic manner. Núñez Pardo and Téllez Téllez (2016) included additional elements that make professional development effective, including content focused, active learning, modeling, coaching, feedback, and reflection. Each professional development session will allow teachers to discuss and evaluate their SEL implementation challenges to create the next steps for growth. Through collaboration, teachers can share knowledge, critically reflect on

teaching practices, provide collegial support or peer feedback, and collectively design teaching methods (de Jong et al., 2019).

When teachers participate in professional development, they are more open to feedback about their teaching practices from colleagues and become more reflective, which is essential for bringing about change in one's attitude towards their practice (Ping et al., 2018). Bates and Morgan (2018) confirmed the positive effect of reflective practice on teachers' professional growth and continuous learning, which can be supported by encouraging them to discuss their professional practices with others. Teachers expressed ideas for modifications to the SEL program, which could be shared with other colleagues during the professional development to improve practices. Sharing ideas on improving program application in combination with supports is a promising approach for increasing the implementation fidelity of evidence-based programs and promoting more substantial program effects (Johnson et al., 2018). The professional development will allow teachers to discuss, practice, and reflect on other challenges presented in the study, including teaching abstract concepts, second language learners, sticking to the curriculum script, and the CPU. Developing common understandings of SEL and aligning SEL practices will help teachers implement SEL programs (Allbright et al., 2019).

SEL Practices

In a study conducted by Blewitt et al. (2020), researchers discovered that SEL programs and practices might strengthen teaching quality, mainly providing responsive and nurturing teacher-student interactions and effective classroom management. Incorporating effective SEL practices daily can support teacher achievement because of

the growth in their ability to cope with and work through difficulties by using emotional

skills (Brackett, 2018). The professional development will address time and the required

structure concerning the importance of implementing SEL practices daily and the

challenges teachers faced during implementation. Hoffmann et al. (2018) recognized that

teacher's SEL capacity, feelings, and experiences they bring to school can influence the

interactions and engagement when learning about SEL or when implementing it in the

classroom with students. Through professional development, teachers can learn, develop,

and reflect on SEL and SEL practices to improve their pedagogy, as effective

implementation is the foundation for facilitating an SEL program with fidelity (Shapiro et

al., 2018). Teachers will have the opportunity to collectively develop SEL practices and

modifications throughout the professional development to improve program

implementation. Social interaction and establishing trust amongst colleagues are the

facilitating conditions of reflective practice, which is a way of developing an

understanding by aligning to experiences (Dogan et al., 2019). The professional

development in this study's project will allow teachers to reflect on the SEL

implementation challenges and to develop best practices that will allow them to execute

the program with fewer challenges.

SEL Strategies

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

(CASEL), the most beneficial strategy is to integrate SEL throughout the school's

academic curricula and culture, across the broader contexts of schoolwide practices and

policies, and through ongoing collaboration with family and community organizations

(Mahoney et al., 2020). Lawson et al. (2019) offered SEL strategies, including tailoring SEL to individual student or classroom need, implementing flexible lessons into busy school schedules, and SEL can be integrated into academic curricula. The professional development project will address time, the required structure, modifications, and other SEL challenges presented so that PK-5 teachers can minimize challenges with integrating SEL. Teachers found SEL coaching to be a beneficial strategy for their own social and emotional growth, which is necessary for effective delivery (Stickle et al., 2019). Coaching will be provided throughout the professional development project to address teachers' SEL program implementation challenges. Teachers will develop and share specific SEL strategies that can help minimize challenges when integrating the SEL program.

Project Description

The data collection and review of literature supported the need to provide homeroom teachers with professional development. The professional development project will occur virtually with specific grade levels. The training will address the SEL implementation challenges and difficulties discussed by homeroom teachers. The project includes a PowerPoint presentation that will be used for each session. The professional development sessions will be virtual for PK-5 homeroom teachers.

Resources, Existing Supports, Potential Barriers, Solutions

The Atlanta Public School District has provided resources that could support implementing this project through the SEL professional development, including the Second Step kit and online portal, SEL books of the month, and the guidance counselor

who has been trained in SEL. The presenter will use a laptop, PowerPoint, handouts, and online curriculum resources. It is essential to consider homeroom teachers as resources because they may want to share practical experiences and resources with their colleagues for reflective and informative purposes.

Potential barriers include reluctance to share experiences, achieving collective buy-in from all participants, and time commitments. Teachers may be reluctant to share past and present teaching and learning experiences in a reflective manner in which other colleagues could benefit. Some homeroom teachers may not desire to change their thinking or instructional practices regarding SEL implementation challenges. Teachers will need time to plan, implement, and reflect to determine the benefits and needs for facilitating the SEL curriculum with fidelity. Through a unified approach, homeroom teachers on each grade level must take a unified approach on the best instructional practices that can be consistently used to implement the Second Step program. Some solutions for the potential barriers may include creating a trusting and safe environment where participants feel welcome to share, respecting participants' time, and providing coaching that will support the needs of each participant.

Proposal for Implementation

The professional development will occur over three full days with PK- 5 homeroom teachers meeting virtually. Participants will participate in reflective and collaborative activities to create the next steps for implementing the SEL Second Step program.

Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

My role in this project is to create and deliver professional development for homeroom teachers at an IB PYP public elementary school in the APSD school district. I will serve as the presenter for each professional development session with different grade levels. Participants will be responsible for sharing experiences, learning new SEL strategies, offering suggestions, and reflecting to improve content delivery. By the last session, homeroom teachers will add their input to the feedback provided by colleagues, the presenter, and possibly the guidance counselor. Many of the participants in this project did not participate in the data collection process but will have the opportunity to expand their knowledge capacity, improve best practices, and widen their engagement regarding SEL implementation.

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Project Evaluation Plan

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Evaluation is a necessary factor to determine the effectiveness of the professional development project. As key stakeholders, homeroom teachers from grades PK-5 will participate in a goal-based evaluation method for this project. A goals-based evaluation will be used to determine the outcome of each participants' project goals compared to the project's original goals, which personalizes the learning environment. Goal setting can benefit teachers by providing a lens through which to scrutinize their teaching and the opportunity to create their path toward learning and growth (Camp, 2017). The initial evaluation will be an informal self-assessment designed to help homeroom teachers assess and understand their social and emotional competence levels. At the end of the professional development, participants will complete a self-care, goal-based evaluation

tool to create future goals to support overall health and manage stress response, which could help minimize challenges with the SEL implementation. Teachers' social emotional wellbeing and how to influence students' SEL must be understood to know how effectively to promote or implement SEL and its components in the classroom. (Schonert-Reicht, 2017). The goals that teachers create throughout the professional development will be compared to the project's goals and used to help determine what changes or new goals should be made regarding the implementation of SEL. The project's goals will be evaluated near the end of the professional development by determining if each one was met through informal feedback from teachers. Homeroom teachers will be given several opportunities to reflect throughout this professional development project to address any SEL implementation challenges.

Project Implications

This study yields valuable data relating to the perspectives of PK-5 teachers' challenges with implementing the Second Step SEL program. The key findings of this study were used to develop the professional learning project and minimize SEL implementation challenges. The professional development sessions are a result of participants' responses to interview questions related to the problem of SEL implementation.

Social Change

Walden University's social change mission encourages all members of the academic community to strive for positive social change, inspire, influence, and impact their diverse communities by helping to meet the challenges and opportunities of

education worldwide (Brown & Baltes, 2017). Possible social change implications for this study may include a critical understanding of the importance of implementing SEL strategies, increased SEL stakeholder professional knowledge, enhanced student knowledge of SEL, and an increased SEL awareness within the school and community. Social change benefits that positively affect society could include students and teachers who are better equipped to manage daily challenges, build positive relationships, make informed decisions, and thrive in school and life. This study adds to the growing research on SEL program implementation and the development of teachers who implement SEL. The project could initiate change within the school district by providing a model and strategies for SEL implementation at IB PYP schools. Homeroom teachers who experience similar issues in SEL implementation could also use the project and the instructional strategies as a framework for professional development. The social change benefit could positively affect teachers' personal development and professional success as educators who implement SEL.

Summary

The literature analysis was conducted to identify peer reviewed articles that could expound on the need for professional development or training regarding the challenges that teachers faced concerning SEL implementation. Section 3 describes the project of this study, rationale, review of literature, evaluation plan, and project implications. The project's strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, reflective analysis about personal learning, social change implications, and

recommendations for future research will be acknowledged throughout the remaining

section.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The concluding section of this study includes my reflections on this study. I revealed the strengths and limitations of the project related to addressing the perspectives of PK-5 teachers on implementing the Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school. This section also includes my insights regarding social change implications, recommendations for alternative approaches, and future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

This study's project has numerous strengths that address the local problem. The findings from the data are the foundation of the project. The professional development is supportive and inclusive of PK-5 homeroom teacher perspectives about SEL program implementation. The project provides opportunities for teachers to interact, share knowledge, exchange perspectives, and tap into each other's expertise. The assessments, practice activities, and additional resources are a strength because the information provided on SEL is valuable and research based. Another strength is that the project provides strategies for extending the SEL program to parents and the community to facilitate new knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Despite the strengths, there were few limitations in this project. Some of the challenges such as teaching abstract concepts such as empathy, modifying the curriculum, having enough time to teach, and teaching second language learners may require additional time to discuss and plan for solutions that the project limits. On day three, the CPU training covers specific topics that are possibly uncomfortable for participants to address. Although the project may have few limitations, the professional

development project is available as a training mechanism to address some homeroom teachers' concerns about implementing SEL.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Based on the work of this study, there are alternative approaches that could be taken to address the local problem differently. Other professional development opportunities for participants in this study could include being sent to additional SEL trainings and hiring an outside consultant or SEL coach. These approaches may require funding, space, time, and resources that may not be readily available or within the local site's budget. Another alternative approach to addressing the problem of the study could be to provide a manual of online SEL implementation resources, which is convenient and may increase participants' buy-in.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Throughout this research process, I learned the importance of being a continuous learner. The feedback and support that I received from Walden professors and online resources helped me develop my writing and research skills. The qualitative checklist helped me fulfill all the study and project components. I learned how to identify a problem, form a purpose, create a research question, determine the methodology, and adequately align each part. Walden's database helped me improve my research skills through constant searches for peer reviewed articles and journals. I applied intense inquiry skills to help me conduct the literature review, which I found tedious and informative. I also learned how to follow a qualitative research design, conduct research,

analyze findings, and develop a professional development project to address the problem in the study.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

Social emotional learning has been an interest of mine since I first began teaching it in the classroom. After two SEL trainings, I began implementing the Second Step program with confidence and found a way to improvise when the lessons did not fit my students' needs. Through faculty and committee meetings, I recognized that some teachers shared their perspectives on the challenges they faced during SEL program implementation, which encouraged me to conduct this study. Teachers deserve quality professional development to successfully implement the SEL program and the challenges they may face. I now have more evidence-based knowledge regarding SEL implementation that can provide insight to teachers within my school. Completing this study has helped me to grow, and my research potential has been maximized. I also learned how to become very organized with much information and manage my time more wisely.

Analysis of Self as a Practitioner

As a practitioner in the field of early childhood education, my knowledge of SEL program implementation was expanded. I must continue building my craft and using the research process to shape interpretations and apply that knowledge to improve SEL program implementation. I have a new understanding of program implementation and how to support colleagues who may face challenges. Teachers should consider participating in professional development to stay abreast of changes in SEL pedagogy

that would benefit them when implementing programs in the classroom. The project

covered an issue in education that was the motivation for me to continue the study. The

literature review on SEL implementation and instruction showed that teachers had faced

challenges with the application. The need for professional development was evident and

expressed throughout participant interviews, which helped me to identify goals and

expected outcomes of SEL delivery. I can now consider myself a scholar practitioner in

SEL implementation.

Analysis of Self as a Project Developer

After collecting and analyzing data from this study, I designed a professional

development project that would address PK-5 homeroom teachers' perspectives regarding

SEL program implementation. During the project development process, I reviewed the

responses and findings from the participants, scholarly projects, and literature with

research based SEL practices and strategies. As a project developer, I have grown into a

professional leader using my expertise to research, plan, and design a project. I can refer

to the research and literature before making critical decisions about changes to program

implementation. It is essential to provide support in mastering how to implement SEL

effectively. I believe this project study will be helpful to other PK-5 teachers who may

face similar challenges with SEL program implementation.

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Reflection on the Importance of the Work

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The importance of this study's work can close the gaps in the literature related to

PK-5 teachers' perspectives on executing SEL. It is imperative to support teachers who

are in charge of supporting students who face various social, emotional, and traumatic

situations. Teachers must be knowledgeable and properly equipped to handle their own emotions while also considering and teaching students how to handle their emotions. Completing my doctoral work can influence teachers within the district regarding SEL, and the skills learned can benefit students' SEL growth. The project study can extend positive growth beyond the school and aligns with creating environments that foster SEL growth and development necessary in the real world.

Through this project study, I gained an in-depth understanding of PK-5 homeroom teachers' needs concerning SEL program implementation challenges. The findings revealed the importance of evaluating teachers' perspectives and using the data to inform professional development. The work of this study can serve as a critical resource at the local site and within the district for other IB PYP public schools. This project study will help educators facilitate the SEL process to minimize implementation challenges.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

In this project study, I explored PK-5 teachers' perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program at an IB PYP public elementary school. The findings improved my understanding of various ways to implement SEL, which is an opportunity to build teachers' capacity through improved practices, strategies, and learning environments. The potential influence for positive social change is evident because the project study addressed how teachers can facilitate learning, growth, and development of SEL, which can indirectly affect administrators, staff, and the local community who also encounter students. SEL growth is not limited to behaviors in school, but the opportunity

to practice the same skills at home and within society is possible. Therefore, the influence of the project study can be widespread and used as a professional development tool.

The findings of this project study revealed PK-5 teachers' needs for professional development in SEL program implementation. There is room for continuous learning regarding SEL, which can prepare teachers on how to implement SEL curriculum and further close the gap in the literature related to teacher facilitation. The extension of SEL throughout the school and community could make meaningful influences on social change and improve social awareness, relationship skills, self-management, self-awareness, and responsible decision making. Furthermore, this project study provides a path to professional development that could assist with increasing knowledge, teacher capacity, preparation, and strategies that could influence the learning environment, student outcomes, and school culture.

Recommendations for Practice and Future Research

The findings of this study revealed the PK-5 homeroom teachers' need for professional development in SEL implementation. Preparation to teach an SEL curriculum is necessary, and there is room for continuous learning in the areas of the project, including teaching abstract concepts, second language learners, and trauma-informed practices. Although the sample size included fifteen participants, I recommend further studies with a larger sample size with participants from multiple schools. Minor changes in the population could provide more insight on teacher perspectives which could further close the gap in the literature related to teacher facilitation of SEL. Extending SEL throughout the school, with parents, and into the community could have

meaningful effects on social change. This project provides direction for professional development that could increase teacher capacity, perspectives, preparation, and strategies that can influence the learning environment, school culture, and local community.

Conclusion

This qualitative project study explored PK-5 teachers' perspectives on implementing the Second Step SEL program. Fifteen homeroom teachers were interviewed to discover their perspectives throughout the SEL implementation process. Five themes developed as a result of the data collection process, including the required structure, lack of training, resources and supports, modifications, and professional learning opportunities. The conclusions drawn from the study are that teachers faced several challenges while executing the Second Step SEL program, and based on their responses, they needed professional development. The conclusions of the project are that meaningful resources and strategies are provided as best practices for homeroom teachers to employ in their classrooms, school, and the local community. This project study adds to the body of literature by providing empirical research, professional development, and implementation strategies for SEL program sustainability.

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Appendix A: The Project

Social Emotional Learning Professional Development

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to address the perspectives of PK-5 homeroom teachers on implementing SEL by coaching them through the process of executing effective strategies and including necessary supports and resources through professional development. By the conclusion of the professional development, the participants will understand how to minimize the challenges they may regarding the implementation of SEL. Teachers will also be able to share experiences and reflect on SEL best practices and strategies. The professional development will serve as a guide that clarifies and unifies the actions around implementing SEL.

Goals: The learning goals of this project are to provide valuable information, strategies and support for PK-5 homeroom teachers who facilitate SEL; offer feedback on the perspectives of teachers about implementing SEL; coach through the process of implementing effective strategies; improve the quality of the implementation of SEL; create personal goals to improve instructional practices; and reflect on SEL best practices and strategies.

Objectives: By the conclusion of this professional development, the participants will be able to explain the importance of the framework guiding the Second Step program concerning teachers' perspectives about challenges, utilize the knowledge of evidence-based SEL implementation, use the experiences and support of colleagues to implement the SEL program effectively, and identify and utilize SEL best practices and implementation strategies.

Learning Outcomes: This professional development will address the following: a capacity to build effective SEL program implementation, PK-5 homeroom teacher perspectives about challenges with implementing SEL, and collaboration about the next implementation steps.

Target Audience, Components, Timeline, Activities

The professional development is designed for all interested PK-5 homeroom teachers who have previously implemented the Second Step SEL program. The professional development will occur for a total of three days.

The first session will begin with sharing the goals, objectives, and learning outcomes of the professional development. Participants will complete an SEL self-assessment evaluation. The remainder of the session will provide an opportunity for teachers to review the SEL challenges, discuss current implementation, and reflect on SEL goals with other colleagues. During the second session, the presenter will review the main elements of the first session and transition to SEL best practices and strategies. This information will be used to complete the practice activity, which involves listing strategies that can be used to model SEL strengths throughout the school day or to improve any implementation challenges. Teachers will present, share, and receive feedback on SEL strategies. The third session will include the Child Protection Unit (CPU), in which participants will learn about the six pillars of trauma and trauma-informed practices. Teachers will also complete a visible thinking routine to examine

propositions about the CPU and complete an evaluation reflecting on what was learned during this professional development

Materials, Implementation Plan, Evaluation Plan

The professional development will require presenter and participant laptops, Internet connectivity, and access to Google docs. A PowerPoint will be used to present information and materials throughout each session. The learning space will occur virtually via Zoom for all three full days. All participants will complete two evaluations at the beginning and end of the professional development. The information can expand the SEL knowledge capacity and competence of PK-5 homeroom teachers who implement SEL.

Agenda

Each session will begin with a welcome, review of the learning goals, objectives, outcomes, and session overview. Teachers will participate in a learning session, an SEL activity for practice, an opportunity to reflect, share, and receive feedback. Participants will be given two breaks and time for lunch in each session.

Professional Development Slides and Session Agendas

Teacher Perspectives on Implementing Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum at an International Baccalaureate Elementary School

Whitney N. Niles

Walden University

- The collected data and review of literature from my study supported the need for a professional development (PD). The professional development will occur at the local site of the study over three sessions. The project will include a PowerPoint and other materials that will be used for three sessions.

Session 1 Agenda	Time	Resources
Introduction • Welcome & Logistics • Learning Goal(s), Objectives, & Outcomes • Session Overview • Self-Assessment Evaluation	8:30 – 9:30 Break included	PowerPoint Slides Google Document (Evaluation)
Review • SEL Implementation Challenges	9:30 – 10:15	PowerPoint Slides
Practice • Current Implementation (strategies/challenges/needs)	10:15 - 11:00	Google Document (What's Working…What's Not Graphic Organizer)
Reflection • Review SEL Implementation Goals	11:00 – 11:30	Turn and Talk
Lunch	11:30 – 1:00	
Discussion, Feedback, & Questions • Present graphic organizer, SEL goals	1:00 – 2:30 Break included	Whole Group Discussion

Welcome & Logistics

Learning Goals

- The goal(s) of this professional development (PD):
  - provide and sustain professional learning with valuable information, strategies and support for PK-5 homeroom teachers who facilitate SEL
  - offer feedback on the perspectives of teachers about implementing SEL
  - coach through the process of implementing effective strategies
  - improve the quality of the implementation of SEL
  - create personal goals to improve instructional practices
  - reflect on SEL best practices and strategies

Learning Objectives

By the end of this professional development, PK-5 homeroom teachers will be able to:

- Explain the importance of the framework guiding the Second Step program concerning teachers' perspectives
- Utilize the knowledge of evidence-based SEL implementation

- Use the experiences and support of colleagues to implement the SEL program effectively
- Identify and utilize SEL best practices and implementation strategies

Learning Outcomes

- This professional development will address the following:
  - a capacity to build effective SEL program implementation,
  - PK-5 homeroom teacher perspectives about challenges with implementing SEL,
  - curriculum and materials to support SEL implementation,
  - collaboration about the next implementation steps

Target Audience

- The professional development is designed for all interested PK-5 homeroom teachers who have participated in implementing the Second Step SEL program. The PD will be three full days.

Session Overview

Session 1 – SEL Implementation Challenges

Self-Assessment Evaluation

Challenges

Practice

Reflection

Discussion, Feedback, Questions

Self-Assessment Evaluation

1. You will have 10 minutes to read each statement and rate yourself by marking the appropriate box as honestly as you can (rarely, sometimes, often).

2. Use the results to identify SEL strengths and areas of growth to help guide best practices

Evaluation Link (Hardcopy available):
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W8-A1Aqh4GxxvT_DHcelSX0SGWhhqeOdmsNpq5muFYY/edit

SEL Implementation Challenges

|	
🕐	Time
⬒	Required Structure
🖥	Teaching Abstract Concepts

Questions to Consider:

➢ How can teachers ensure that SEL is implemented daily?

➢ What is the required structure for SEL program implementation? flexibility?

➢ How do you teach abstract concepts? i.e., empathy

SEL Implementation Challenges

Sticking to the Script

Second Language Learners

Modifications

Child Protection Unit
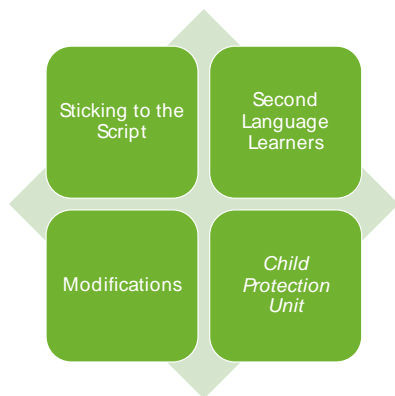
Questions to Consider:

➢ How does sticking to the curriculum script guide or challenge your teaching?

➢ How can the SEL program support second language learners?

➢ What modifications have you made during SEL program implementation?

Practice: Current Implementation

- *What's Working…..What's Not: A strategy for evaluating challenges and making decisions*

- Please use the following link to complete the graphic organizer as a group or individually (Hardcopy available): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hAYdBNB9qgShoSj q4KgEJ01J7p61Sk1eT8t1O3Y5q1I/edit

Reflection

Turn and Talk

- Review SEL Implementation Goals:

1. Changes to make
2. Things to do
3. Options to consider

Example SEL Goals:

- Form an SEL Team/Club
- Train all faculty and staff
- Merge SEL curriculum into daily curriculum

Discussion, Feedback, & Questions

Session 2 Agenda	Time	Resources
Introduction • Welcome • Learning Goal(s), Objectives, & Outcomes • Session Overview • Review Session 1	8:30 – 9:30 Break included	PowerPoint Slides
Review • SEL best practices & strategies	9:30 – 10:00	PowerPoint Slides
Practice • Taking Action! (review self-assessment prior)	10:00 - 11:00	Google Document (Taking Action!)
Reflection	11:00 – 11:30	Pair-Share
Lunch	11:30 – 1:00	
Discussion, Feedback, & Questions • Present Taking Action!	1:00 – 2:30 Break included	Whole Group Discussion

Session Overview

Session 2 – SEL Best Practices & Strategies

Review Session 1

Best Practices & Strategies

Practice

Reflection

Discussion, Feedback, Questions

SEL Best Practices & Strategies

Review:

- *What's Working….What's Not*
- Challenges
- Strategies
- Needs

- CASEL Strategies

CASEL Strategies

The Key Settings: (Classrooms, Schools, Families/Caregivers & Communities)

CASEL framework:	
	takes a systemic approach
	emphasizes equitable learning environments
	coordinates practices across key settings
	enhances students' social, emotional, and academic learning

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

CASEL believes:	integrating SEL throughout school's academic curricula and culture	ongoing collaboration with families/community organizations
fostering youth voice, agency, and engagement	establishing supportive classroom, school climates, and approaches to discipline	enhancing adult SEL competence

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Classrooms

SEL competence can be enhanced using a variety of classroom-based approaches:

➢ explicit instruction

➢ cooperative learning

➢ project-based learning

➢ integration of SEL and academic curriculum

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Classrooms

High-quality SEL instruction has four elements represented by the acronym SAFE:

> Sequenced

> Active

> Focused

> Explicit

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Classrooms

SEL instruction is carried out most effectively:

> nurturing, safe environments
> positive, caring relationships
> age-appropriate
> culturally responsive
> understand strengths and needs of each student

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Classrooms

SEL instruction is carried out most effectively:

➢incorporate students' personal experiences
➢inclusive classroom environment
➢co-learning
➢foster students and adult growth
➢generate collaborative solutions and shared concerns

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Schools

Effectively integrating SEL schoolwide involves:	ongoing planning
	implementation
	evaluation
	continuous improvement
	supportive school environment

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Schools

Because the school setting has many contexts—

- classrooms
- cafeteria
- playground
- bus

fostering a healthy school climate and culture requires active engagement from all adults and students.

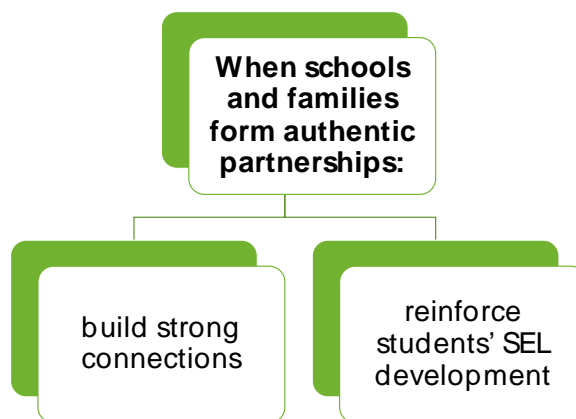Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Schools

A strong school culture is rooted in:

➢ students' sense of belonging

➢ students' engagement

➢ academic and behavioral supports

➢ an environment that infuses SEL into students' educational experience

➢ positive social, emotional, and academic outcomes for all students

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Families/Caregivers

When schools and families form authentic partnerships:

build strong connections

reinforce students' SEL development

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Families/Caregivers

Families and caregivers:

children's first teachers

bring expertise about student's development, experiences, culture, and learning needs

insights and perspectives are critical to informing, supporting, and sustaining SEL efforts

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

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Families/Caregivers

SEL programs are more effective:

- when they extend into the home
- families form partnerships with schools
- schools' norms, values, and cultural representations reflect family experiences
- inclusive SEL decision-making processes

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Families/Caregivers

Schools can create family partnerships including:	ongoing two-way communication
	helping caregivers understand child development
	helping teachers understand family backgrounds/cultures
	opportunities for families to volunteer
	extending learning activities and discussions into homes
	family services with community partners

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Communities

Community partners:

- provide safe and developmentally rich settings for learning and development
- deep understanding of community needs and assets
- trusted by families and students
- connections to supports and services that schools and families need

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Communities

Community programs also offer:

➢ opportunities for young people to practice their SEL skills

➢ settings that are personally relevant

➢ open opportunities for the future

➢ coordinate strategies and communication around SEL-related efforts and initiatives

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.).

Practice: Taking Action!

- Teachers will list strategies that can be used to model SEL strengths throughout the school day or to improve any implementation challenges.

- After reviewing your results from the self-assessment, please use the following link to complete the activity individually (Hardcopy available):
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_hNH4ZWlzH6VdEUndC-fJxbPB7Ei_Lm-yqeayalN2SI/edit

Reflection

- Pair – Share
- Teachers will share the strategies they developed during Taking Action!

Discussion, Feedback, & Questions

Session 3 Agenda	Time	Resources
Introduction • Welcome • Learning Goal(s), Objectives, & Outcomes • Session Overview • Review Sessions 1- 2	8:30 – 9:30 Break included	PowerPoint Slides
Review • Child Protection Unit (CPU) • 6 Pillar of Trauma • Trauma Informed Practices	9:30 – 10:30	PowerPoint Slides
Practice • Visible Thinking Routine	10:30 - 11:00	Google Document
Reflection • PD Goal Assessment • *What Did You Learn?*	11:00 – 11:30	Google Document (Evaluation)
Lunch	11:30 – 1:00	
Discussion, Feedback, & Questions • Present Visible Thinking & *What Did You Learn?*	1:00 – 2:30 Break included	Whole Group Discussion

Session Overview

Session 3 – The Child Protection Unit (CPU)

Review Session 2

CPU

Practice

Reflection

Discussion, Feedback, Questions

The Child Protection Unit

- What are the CPU implementation challenges?

- How can the CPU implementation challenges be addressed?

Strategies and Practices to Consider:

- 6 Pillars of Trauma (safety, trustworthiness & transparency, peer support, collaboration & mutuality, empowerment, voice & choice, and cultural issues)

- Trauma-Informed Best Practices (trigger identification, games, self-care, skill-building, physical activity, self-regulation (zones), connectedness, therapy)

Practice: Visible Thinking Strategy

- **COMPASS POINTS**: In the following Visible Thinking Routine, you will examine propositions about the Child Protection Unit.

  N = Need to Know, S = Stance or Suggestion for Moving Forward, E = Excited, W = Worrisome

- Please use the following link to complete the Visible Thinking Routine as a group or individually (Hardcopy available): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BhgzKRi-2MUCbaYCu7y4hqlVj6qKk82_V1KgMKN76D0/edit

Reflection

Goal Assessment: Review PD goals

Evaluation: *What Did You Learn?*

▪ Reflecting on what was learned during this professional development

Please use the following link to complete the evaluation (Hardcopy available):
https://docs.google.com/document/d/19ZPsvdUQT9YF7Cagf xuFAnht_rvv0MyG5JmgxT304LM/edit

Discussion, Feedback, & Questions

References

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▪ Fradd, B. (2017). Working with Relational and Developmental Trauma in Children and Adolescents by Karen Treisman. *Adoption & Fostering, 41(4)*, 428–429. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308575917741829a

▪ Sweeney, A., Filson, B., Kennedy, A., Collinson, L., & Gillard, S. (2018). A paradigm shift: relationships in trauma-informed mental health services. *BJPsych Advances*, *24*(5), 319–333. https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2018.29

SEL Pre-Evaluation
Personal Assessment – SEL Competencies for Stakeholders Who Support SEL

Purpose

This tool is designed to help those who implement SEL begin to assess and understand their social and emotional competence levels. That way, you can consciously model the skills throughout implementation and minimize challenges.

How to use this tool

This tool is to be used for self-reflection, and it should not be used to evaluate performance. This tool will help you learn more about personal strengths and consider how you can model these strengths when interacting with others and implementing SEL. There are areas where you could enhance your SEL competency, and this tool will prompt you to start thinking of strategies you use to promote growth in those areas to minimize implementation challenges.

Steps

1. Read each statement, then rate yourself on the statement by marking in the appropriate box (rarely, sometimes, often).
2. If a statement does not apply to you, draw a line through the rating box.

Next Steps

When you finish, you will use the results to search for patterns of strength to help you guide your personal social emotional growth process. You may also find some areas that you would like to improve. Don't judge yourself as "good" or "not so good" by the responses that you mark. Just answer as honestly as you can. You will use the results of this evaluation in Session 2. The insights that you gain through using this tool for self-assessment can be shared in small group discussion about SEL competence and implementation.

Self-Awareness	Rarely	Some-times	Often
EMOTIONAL **SELF-AWARENESS**	I am able to identify, recognize and name my emotions in the moment.			
	I recognize the relationship between my feelings and my reactions to people and situations.			
	I can see the big picture in a complex situation.			
ACCURATE **SELF-PERCEPTION**	I know and am realistic about my strengths and limitations.			
	I encourage others to tell me how my actions have affected them.			
	I know how my own needs and values affect the decisions I make.			
SELF-CONFIDENCE	I believe I have what it takes to influence my own destiny and lead others effectively.			
	I feel confident that I can handle whatever comes along with calm self-assurance and a relaxed presence.			
OPTIMISM	I believe that most experiences help me learn and grow.			
	I can see the positive even in negative situations.			

	Rarely	Some-times	Often
Self-Management			

SELF-CONTROL	I find ways to manage my emotions and channel them in useful ways without harming anyone.			
	I stay calm, clear-headed and unflappable under high stress and during a crisis.			
SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS	I have high personal standards that motivate me to seek performance improvements for myself and those I lead.			
	I am pragmatic, setting measurable, challenging and attainable goals.			
ADAPTABILITY	I accept new challenges and adjust to change.			
	I modify my thinking in the face of new information and realities.			
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS	I can juggle multiple demands without losing focus or energy.			
	I balance my work life with personal renewal time.			

	Rarely	Some-times	Often
Social Awareness			

		Rarely	Some-times	Often
EMPATHY	I listen actively and can grasp another person's perspective and feelings from both verbal and nonverbal cues.			
RESPECT FOR OTHERS	I believe that, in general, people are doing their best, and I expect the best of them.			
APPRECIATION OF DIVERSITY	I appreciate and get along with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures in my school community and utilize inclusionary practices to ensure all voices are represented.			
ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS	I am politically astute and am able to identify crucial social networks.			
	I understand the political forces at work, the guiding values, and unspoken rules that operate among people.			
Relationship Skills		Rarely	Some-times	Often
COMMUNICATION	I foster an emotionally nurturing and safe environment for staff, students, families and community members.			
	I am open and authentic with others about my values and beliefs, goals and guiding principles.			
	I communicate with and encourage interaction with staff, students, parents and caregivers, and community members.			
	I can articulate SEL in ways that motivate others to become involved.			

		Rarely	Some-times	Often
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS	I have a genuine interest in cultivating people's growth and developing their SEL skills			
	I am able to openly admit my mistakes and shortcomings to myself and others.			
	I try to understand the perspective and experiences of others before I offer suggestions.			
	I give timely and constructive feedback as a coach and mentor.			
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT	I am comfortable surfacing conflict; listening to feelings from all parties and helping them understand different perspectives.			
	I am able to guide conflicting parties to find a common solution.			
TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION	I prefer teamwork and collaboration and generate a collegial atmosphere that inspires us all.			
	I build relationships with community members to support SEL.			
	I involve key stakeholders in important decision-making tasks to ensure we are making wise choices.			
	I embody SEL in my leadership style and personal behaviors as a role model to staff, students and the school community.			
Responsible Decision-Making		Rarely	Some-times	Often
	I am able to define the core of the problem and differentiate it from solution options.			

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND SITUATION ANALYSIS	I recognize the need for change, challenge the status quo and encourage new thinking in my school.			
	I conduct a needs analysis and involve the staff to identify problems before starting a new initiative.			
PROBLEM SOLVING	I involve others to generate multiple solutions and predict the outcome (of each solution) for key problems.			
	I find practical and respectful ways to overcome barriers, even when it comes to making decisions that may not be popular.			
EVALUATION & REFLECTION	I use more than one measure to assess progress toward social, emotional, and academic goals.			
	I provide opportunities for self-reflection and for group reflection on progress toward goals and the process used.			
PERSONAL, MORAL & ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY	I treat other people in the way I would want to be treated.			
	I encourage community service activities for students, staff and the community			

SEL Post-Evaluation
Reflecting on what was learned during this professional development

After completing the SEL pre-evaluation in the beginning of this professional development, look at the statements and how you rated them. The purpose of having the list of behaviors is to help develop more awareness around where you are in your life towards nurturing these behaviors in yourself and others, which will assist you during SEL implementation.

Here are some self-reflection questions you can ask yourself:
1. What were the patterns in my responses?

· *If you consider that statements marked as **"often"** could be indicators of personal strengths:*
   - *What competencies do your strengths relate to?*
   - *Which of your strengths do you believe will help you guide the change process to improve social, emotional, and academic learning?*
   - *Which are you most proud of?*

· *If you consider that statements marked as **"rarely"** could be considered as current challenges:*
   - *Do these challenges relate to a particular competency?*
   - *Select one or two you believe you will need to help you guide the change process to improve social, emotional, and academic learning.*
   - *Develop a strategy that you will use to remind yourself to practice this new behavior.*

2. When looking at your responses, was there anything that surprised you? Was there anything that helped confirm what you already knew about yourself?

3. What additional support do you or your colleagues need to facilitate SEL in your school?

4. I have enough knowledge about teachers facilitating SEL to currently rate myself as
   o Exemplary
   o Proficient
   o Ready to implement but needs more professional development
   o Not ready to implement SEL

5. What are the best three SEL strategies to implement in your school and why?

6. What additional support do you need to effectively facilitate the CPU?

What's Working...What's Not

A strategy for evaluating challenges and making decisions

What SEL challenge are you evaluating?	What is your objective or goal?
What's Working?	What's Not?

SEL Implementation Goals:
Changes to make / Things to do / Options to consider

Taking Action!

The questions are intended to help teachers take action on what they learned after completing the self-assessment evaluation from Session 1.

Below, list strategies you can use to model your strengths for others and embed them throughout the school day.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

List strategies you can use to improve on any challenges you currently face.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

COMPASS POINTS

In the following Visible Thinking Routine, you will examine propositions about the Child Protection Unit (CPU).

1. N = Need to Know What else do you need to know or find out about the CPU? What additional information would help you to evaluate the CPU?	2. S = Stance or Suggestion for Moving Forward What is your current stance or opinion on the CPU? How might you move forward in your evaluation of the CPU?
3. E = Excited What excites you about the CPU? What's the upside of the CPU?	4. W = Worrisome What do you find worrisome about the CPU? What's the downside of the CPU?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Name of Interviewer: Whitney Niles

Name of Interviewee:

Date/Time:

Location:

Ice Breaker Questions

1. How long have you been a teacher?

2. How long have you been at this school?

3. What is your experience with SEL?

4. How does SEL work in your classroom?

5. What resources are available to you?

6. What trainings have you participated in regarding the SEL curriculum?

7. What would you add or delete to the SEL curriculum?

Main Questions

1. How would you describe SEL instruction in your classroom in regard to implementing the Second Step program?

2. How is SEL instruction supported at your school?

3. What is the required structure for implementing the SEL curriculum?

4. What elements of the Second Step SEL program would you consider to be challenging for you to implement?

5. *Explain any challenges involved in the implementation of SEL instruction.*

6. What do you do regularly to address implementation challenges?

7. How do you modify the SEL curriculum when experiencing challenges with implementation?

8. What "other" kind of materials and resources do you utilize to align with the SEL curriculum?

9. Describe any training or ongoing professional learning opportunities to assist in providing SEL instruction.