Teacher expectancies and student social emotional learning post-pandemic

Citation

Permanent link

Terms of Use

Share Your Story

Teacher expectancies and student social emotional learning post-pandemic

Josée Roberge

A Thesis in the Field of Psychology

for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

March 2024

Abstract

The integration of social and emotional learning (SEL) in P-12 classrooms may impact student psychological, social, behavioral, and academic outcomes. The present paper examined teachers' beliefs about SEL, their perceptions of student SEL skills pre and post pandemic, the expectancies they hold for student SEL development, and the implementation of SEL in their post-pandemic classrooms. A 45-item online survey was conducted with a convenience sample of 19 experienced teachers. The survey contained 34 Likert scale items and closed and open-ended questions to allow the participants to share their thoughts, perspectives, and beliefs about SEL. An exploratory analysis of the data using descriptive statistics, data visualization, and thematic analysis suggested that teachers perceived a decline in student SEL skills post-pandemic. Furthermore, teacher perceptions about SEL, expectancies for student post-pandemic SEL development and SEL classroom implementation varied by a teacher's age and school level taught. This study begins to illuminate questions regarding teacher beliefs, practices, and perceived barriers to SEL teaching for future studies.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1.

Introduction

In response to increasing interest in student social emotional development, educators are guided by the framework for social and emotional learning (SEL) provided by The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) for the implementation of SEL programs in schools (Green et al., 2021; Haymovitz et al., 2018; Li et al., 2021). The CASEL framework consists of five core competency areas including: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness. A focus on these skills in schools has been shown to increase students' social, psychological, behavioral, and academic outcomes (Durlak et al 2011; Green et al., 2021; Haymovitz et al., 2018). Indeed, Haymovitz et al. (2018) concluded that these skills have become fundamental to academic programming.

The lockdowns experienced by students because of the Covid-19 pandemic have produced circumstances that inhibit the growth of social and emotional skills (Grammer et al., 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021). Limited access to social situations and an overall decrease in mental health may have delayed the social and emotional development of children and adolescents during the two years of the pandemic, and research on the amplitude of these delays is ongoing (Caffo et al. 2021; Singh et al., 2020). Teacher beliefs about social and emotional learning and their expectancies related to student social and emotional skills may play an important role in the ability of students to overcome this deficit (Bhatnagar & Many, 2022).

Considering the importance of SEL in schools and the current diminished state of student social and emotional skills, a greater understanding of the teacher role in developing student SEL skills is imperative. Teacher expectancy is a phenomenon in which educators make suppositions based on their perceived knowledge of students which inadvertently lead to varying expectations and ultimately, disparate outcomes (Murdock-Perriera & Sedlacek, 2018). Since research has shown that teacher expectancies can determine a student's achievement motivation, self-concept, and belief about their abilities (Brackett et al., 2012; Chandrasegaran et al. 2018), a teacher's perceptions of their students' social and emotional skills in the post-pandemic era are key to future social and emotional growth and development. The expectancies teachers have about potential student SEL growth and development post-pandemic may be a determining factor in student SEL outcomes.

In addition, as shown in multiple studies, teachers' beliefs about SEL may determine their willingness to implement SEL in their classroom (Brackett et al., 2012; Schultz et al., 2010; Zolkoski et al., 2020). A teacher's individual understanding of the concept of SEL includes a judgment based on the interpretation of their experience of SEL (Pajares, 1992). An educator's beliefs about SEL may have undergone important changes throughout the pandemic, given the varying judgments they may make about these skills in pre- and post-pandemic contexts. In his article on the nature of beliefs, Pajares (1992) provides evidence that "the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom." Therefore, research on teacher beliefs about SEL (Buchanan et al., 2009; Collie et al., 2015; Poulou, 2017) and their expectancies of student abilities (Jimenez Morales &

Lopez Zafra, 2013; Pinar & Sucuoglu, 2011) leads to the conclusion that teachers'

perceptions of student social and emotional skills post-pandemic can either help to

increase these essential skills after several years of hardship, or they can hinder student

growth and success.

Although studies have been conducted to explore teacher perceptions of students'

social and emotional skills (Buchanan et al., 2009; Collie et al., 2015; Poulou, 2017;

Zolkoski et al., 2020), more studies are needed that specifically explore the impact of the

pandemic on these skills. Given the negative effect of Covid-19 lockdowns on social and

emotional skills and the prominent role that teachers play in delivering SEL in the

classroom, measuring teachers' current thoughts and perceptions is an important step in

understanding SEL implementation in post-Covid classrooms. Consequently, the

following study examined teachers' beliefs about SEL, their perceptions of student SEL

skills pre and post pandemic, the expectancies they hold for student SEL development,

and the implementation of SEL in their post-pandemic classrooms.

The following research questions guided this dissertation:

1. How do experienced teachers perceive students' social and emotional skills,
   post-pandemic?

2. What are teachers' beliefs about SEL?

3. What are experienced teachers' expectancies about student social and
   emotional skill growth and development and how do they report implementing
   SEL in the post-pandemic classroom?

The purpose of this exploratory study is to better understand experienced

teachers' perceptions, expectancies, and current teaching practices regarding student SEL

post-pandemic. The exploration of teacher expectancies regarding SEL post-pandemic may help us to understand the circumstances under which these expectancies take place, their potential impact on classroom behaviors that determine student outcomes, and the mechanisms for implementation of SEL in post-Covid classrooms.

Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom

Over the past decades, several authors have recommended that social and emotional learning (SEL) become a priority in school curricula because of its considerable effect on student psychological, social, behavioral, and academic outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011; Haymovitz et al., 2018). In addition to its effects on students, SEL has also been shown to improve school and classroom climate as well as teacher attitudes about their work and stress level (Davies et al., 2021; Durlak et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2021; Sandilos et al., 2020). This literature review examines the psychological, social, academic, and teaching benefits of SEL.

Psychological Benefits of SEL

Research focused on social and emotional skills has resulted in compelling evidence for the psychological benefits of implementing SEL in the classroom. A variety of studies have demonstrated that SEL helps to overcome traumatic life experiences, reduce learning anxiety and other internalizing symptoms as well as increase overall well-being (Babalis et al., 2013; Davies et al., 2021; Deli et al., 2021; Haymovitz et al., 2018; Neth et al., 2020). Ahmed et al. (2020) investigated the impact of the SEL program RULER on Nigerian middle school students experiencing violence because of social unrest. Their findings confirm that increased social-emotional competence is a factor that helps youth overcome adverse childhood experiences. The authors credit this effect to an

increase in empathy, communication skills and perspective taking. The implementation of the SEL program Strong Kids in a classroom dedicated to suburban middle school students at-risk for emotional and behavioral disorders in the Western United-States produced similar results (Neth et al., 2020). Internalizing symptoms such as social avoidance and low self-perception decreased following the intervention, with both students and teachers reporting improvements on this measure. Comparably, Deli et al. (2021) reported a decrease in learning anxiety when teachers implemented SEL alongside the academic curriculum in a group of grade eight students in Southwest rural China. The authors explain that high levels of internalizing symptoms have led to mental health issues in this part of the country, and SEL plays a role in attenuating these problems. In addition to these specific outcomes, both Davies et al. (2021) and Haymovitz et al. (2018) have reported increased student well-being following the implementation of SEL. Although these studies involved vastly different populations, with participants from the former including 300 students from a low socioeconomic status public school in Australia and the latter including 32 students from a high SES private school in Vermont, USA, teachers, and students reported a positive change in well-being. Overall, teaching social and emotional skills contributes to student success by improving psychological well-being.

<center>Social Benefits of SEL</center>

Along with psychological benefits, SEL has been shown to increase prosocial behavior required for healthy growth and development and decrease problematic behaviors that impede progress (Davies et al., 2021; Green et al., 2021; Bierman et al., 2010; Haymovitz et al., 2018). For example, students in grades one through three, from

12 schools across the United-States were judged by both their peers and their teachers as more socially competent after participating in the SEL program SPARK (Bierman et al., 2010). This program was also successful in reducing impulsivity in a large group of students from two schools in a district located in the Southern United-States (Green et al., 2021). Moreover, students in the private Vermont school community studied by Haymovitz et al. (2018) reported having enhanced relationships with their peers and teachers following the implementation of the SEL program Social Harmony. Furthermore, a reduction in aggressive and antisocial behavior was observed in two large longitudinal studies conducted by Bierman et al. (2010) and Davies et al. (2021). In both cases, the SEL interventions led to a decrease in oppositional behavior and conduct problems, with Davies et al. (2021) reporting a 41% decrease in behavioral incidents over the course of 4 years. In summary, the behavioral improvements gained by SEL contribute to increased positive outcomes for students.

Academic Benefits of SEL

In addition to the psychological, social, and behavioral benefits of SEL implementation, studies have shown increases in academic performance and engagement as well as decreases in students' intentions to drop out of school (Babalis et al., 2013; Davies et al., 2021; Deli et al., 2021; Durlak et al., 2011; Bierman et al., 200). Study findings regularly demonstrate that developing social and emotional skills is associated with higher grades and improved academic abilities. Indeed, fifth and sixth grade Greek students received higher grades in both languages and social studies and Australian students in grades one through three increased literacy and numeracy scores (Babalis et al., 2013; Davies et al., 2021). Moreover, Durlak et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis

demonstrated an overall 11 percentile increase in academic achievement because of the implementation of SEL in the classroom. In addition, teachers in Bierman et al.'s (2010) longitudinal study of the SEL program PATH reported that academic engagement, as measured by cognitive concentration, increased in students from both low and high SES schools. And finally, students in rural junior high school Chinese classrooms indicated a reduction in their intention to drop out of school following a SEL intervention in their classroom (Deli et al., 2021). Taken together, the psychological, social, and academic benefits demonstrated throughout these studies make implementing SEL necessary in the 21st century classroom.

<div align="center">Teacher and Classroom Benefits of SEL</div>

Aside from its meaningful impact on individual students, SEL is associated with a positive classroom climate, improved teacher attitude and productivity and decreased teacher burnout (Haymovitz et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2021; Teeters et al., 2021; Sandilos et al., 2020). Studies focusing on training teachers to implement SEL in the classroom demonstrate several positive consequences of understanding and teaching social and emotional skills. Interestingly, SEL may serve as a protective factor, leading teachers to feel less emotional exhaustion (Kim et al., 2021) and less distress (Teeters et al., 2021), to decrease burnout (Sandilos et al., 2020) and increase productivity (Haymovitz et al., 2018). As a result of these changes in teacher attitude, study authors also report increases in positive school and classroom climate. In their study of preschool teachers, Sandilos et al. (2020) concluded that SEL training decreases overall levels of burnout and increases positive teacher-child interactions, which in turn increases positive school climate. Similarly, the students and teachers in Haymovitz et al.'s (2018) study report improved

student-teacher relationships. Ultimately, extending teaching practices to include SEL improves both individual student abilities and general features of education that help to determine final outcomes. It is easy to conclude that SEL should occupy a portion of daily instructional time.

<p style="text-align:center;">The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Student SEL</p>

The unprecedented disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of schools in one hundred sixty-five countries, affecting one and a half billion students (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021). Throughout this crisis, the social and emotional well-being of youth, including their ability to continue to learn and apply SEL skills, has been of paramount concern. Despite attempts to adapt SEL to online environments (Li et al., 2021; Zieher et al., 2021), pandemic factors such as personal experiences with illness, prolonged social isolation, and other adverse childhood experiences, have led to a decrease in social and emotional skills (Branje et al., 2021; Jones, 2021; Trinidad, 2021). Although research is limited, initial findings show that a large proportion of youth have faced this decline (Salmela-Aro et al., 2021), with individuals from racially and ethnically marginalized and lower-income communities suffering the greatest SEL losses (Branje et al., 2021; Jones, 2021; Trinidad, 2021). Researchers and educational stakeholders agree that it is crucial for students to recover the loss in social and emotional skills not only to ensure positive future academic, psychological, social, and behavioral outcomes but also to overcome the trauma caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (Bond, 2020; Branje et al., 2021; Jones, 2021; Trinidad, 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021; Santibañez & Guarino, 2021).

Despite some positive findings regarding student social and emotional skills during the pandemic (Branje et al., 2021, Timmons et al., 2021), most studies have concluded that a large portion of children and adolescents have experienced social and emotional adjustment issues, leading to decreases in social and emotional skills. Indeed, Salmela-Aro et al. (2021) reports that 74% of elementary students and 84% of middle school students in their study showed a decrease in academic well-being, which was accompanied by a reduction in social and emotional skills. Likewise, in their study on the impact of pandemic lockdowns on the emotional intelligence of nine and ten-year-old Spanish children, Grammer et al. (2021) reported lower interpersonal, intrapersonal and adaptability skills. Furthermore, several authors report a strong correlation between loneliness and diminished SEL (Branje et al., 2021; Egan et al. 2021; Timmons et al., 2021). In their review of 21 studies focusing on the impact of the pandemic on adolescents, Branje et al. (2021) identifies the importance of social interaction to adolescent social and emotional growth and development. The authors' summary reveals that, overall, adolescent social and emotional skills decreased because of long periods of forced isolation during the pandemic.

Similarly, parents and educators expressed profound concerns about the effects of a lack of social interaction throughout the pandemic on young children (Egan et al. 2021; Timmons et al., 2021). Many parents reported an increase in externalizing behaviors such as tantrums and clinginess. Santibañez & Guarino (2021) also describe the reduction in social and emotional development associated with absenteeism. Data on student absences before and during the pandemic, in six California school districts, demonstrates that, as student absences increased over the pandemic years, scores on scales measuring social

awareness, self-efficacy, self-management and growth mindset decreased. This data suggests that student behavior in post-pandemic classrooms may reflect their SEL needs. Given their prominent role in students' lives, teachers may play an important role in student SEL development.

The notable decline in social and emotional skills from the pandemic has also been shown to be more drastic in children and adolescents who have risk factors such as the prior experience of trauma, the presence of an existing disorder or membership in racially and ethnically marginalized and lower-income communities (Branje et al., 2021; Jones, 2021; Trinidad, 2021). In his description of the dual pandemics of Covid-19 and racism, Jones (2021) explains that the emotional consequences of the pandemic are magnified in communities of color given their disproportionate experiences with human and financial loss. Findings demonstrate that elevated levels of worry erode children and adolescents' ability to self-regulate when faced with difficult situations that extend beyond those related to the pandemic. An additional concern revealed by Trinidad (2021) is the lack of equity in access to instructional support for SEL. Children with low-income families, special needs, mental health issues or experiencing trauma may have diminished access to instruction that creates barriers to their social and emotional growth and development. Similarly, Branje et al. (2021) points out that low levels of social and emotional well-being in at-risk adolescents pre-pandemic has led to increased maladjustment post-pandemic.

The negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children and adolescent social and emotional skills has urged stakeholders to make post-pandemic SEL implementation in schools a priority. Several authors have expressed the importance of responding to the

social and emotional needs of students to help them to develop the skills necessary to cope with and to overcome the effects of the pandemic (Bond, 2020; Branje, 2021; Trinidad, 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021). Santibañez & Guarino (2021) have highlighted the necessity to make up for SEL losses to prevent negative psychological, social, and academic outcomes. Finally, Jones (2021) suggests that the implementation of SEL be at the heart of daily interactions in post-pandemic schools to remedy situations of inequity. Taken together, these studies suggest negative patterns that may raise stakeholder concerns and calls for action regarding SEL at school. While the implementation of SEL was a priority in pre-pandemic classrooms (Green et al., 2021, Durlak et al. 2011, Haymovitz et al., 2018), evidence of post-Covid SEL decline has positioned SEL as an immediate need.

<center>Teacher Beliefs About the Implementation of SEL in the Classroom</center>

The extant literature confirms the positive role of SEL on student outcomes when implemented in schools and negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on student social and emotional skills. Since teachers are primarily responsible for SEL delivery, their attitude towards and understanding of SEL is fundamental to developing student social and emotional skills post-pandemic. However, research has consistently shown that teachers hold a variety of beliefs that determine their willingness and ability to implement SEL in their classroom (Brackett et al., 2012; Schultz et al., 2010).

First, Schultz et al. (2010) found, when studying teacher attitudes, that perceived competence in teaching SEL determined whether and how teachers would implement a SEL program. Notably, 80% of teachers in Buchanan et al.'s (2009) study were somewhat or not at all satisfied with their current SEL knowledge and skills and 75%

<center>11</center>

were somewhat or not at all confident in implementing SEL. Furthermore, middle and high school teachers have been shown to be less confident in SEL classroom implementation (Collie et al., 2015). The authors of this study posit that limited time with students because of class rotations decreases their ability to develop relationships that are necessary for SEL application. Conversely, in a study of teacher's intentions to adopt a SEL program, Zolkoski et al. (2020) reported that confidence in the ability to teach social and emotional skills determined early adoption. In fact, in a separate study, mastery of teaching these skills led to a learning cycle that encouraged continual use of SEL in the classroom (Larsen & Samdal, 2012). Given these results, it is important to understand whether teachers have the confidence to implement SEL in classrooms where students social and emotional skills have knowingly regressed.

Other barriers preventing teachers from implementing SEL are time constraints and, correspondingly, academic priority. Almost half of the 263 teachers surveyed by Buchanan et al. (2009) demonstrated a reluctance to devote 15 minutes of their preparation time to SEL lessons. This same group cited time allotted to preparation and lesson delivery as major barriers to SEL implementation. Similarly, when asked to share their experience of the implementation of a SEL program in a school with at-risk students, educators indicated that the lack of time caused by prioritizing academic mastery was an obstacle (Howley et al., 2021). In their study aimed at developing a questionnaire, time constraints and prioritizing academic learning were identified as distinct constructs guiding SEL beliefs about the feasibility of SEL implementation. Teachers' reluctance to devote their time to implementing SEL pre-pandemic may indicate that this will again be a factor upon returning to school after a pandemic. It is

also highly conceivable that, given post-pandemic learning loss (Page et al., 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021) teachers will choose to prioritize academics over SEL.

In line with teachers' beliefs about time constraints and academic priorities are their views about who is responsible for teaching SEL and the effectiveness of SEL programs. Howley et al. (2021) explain that teachers often view families as having a negative impact on student social and emotional skill development by avoiding their responsibilities towards student SEL. This leads to teacher beliefs that implementing a SEL program is often ineffective. Alternatively, some teachers believe that SEL implementation is the responsibility of other professionals such as psychologists or social workers, or subject specialists such as health and physical education teachers (Buchanan et al., 2009). Still others need to believe that a SEL program is effective at altering student behavior to continue its implementation. Indeed, teachers in four Norwegian elementary schools shared their willingness to continue the use of the Second Step program because they perceived it to be effective at calming students (Larsen & Samdal, 2012). These results lead to important considerations for post-pandemic SEL implementation. Namely, teachers may be more or less willing to implement SEL based on how responsible they feel for helping students to overcome the effects of the pandemic and whether they believe that SEL is effective enough to accomplish this goal.

An equally important factor in determining a teacher's willingness and ability to implement SEL in the classroom is their beliefs about student SEL abilities and their own social and emotional capacities. Marsh & Kennedy (2020) identify deficit thinking as a culprit in teacher beliefs about disparate results in SEL outcomes. The authors explain that teachers often attribute low levels of social and emotional skills to a student's

personal characteristics rather than an external factor such as a pandemic. Evidence from this study suggests that these pre-existing beliefs about student abilities shape how they make sense of SEL implementation in their classroom. If teachers believe low levels of social and emotional skills are a result of personal ability, they are also likely to believe that their own practices will not affect student SEL. A similar conclusion was reached by Morgan et al. (2022) following the implementation of a professional development approach aimed at providing support for teachers implementing SEL in their classrooms. Teachers in this study stated that students' lack of social and emotional abilities impedes their use of the SEL program. This belief may hinder post-pandemic implementation of SEL because of the substantial decrease in student social and emotional skills. Teachers may believe students have minimal chances of surmounting the considerable effects of the pandemic.

In addition to beliefs about student SEL capabilities, the level of a teacher's social and emotional abilities also determines SEL program implementation. There is consensus in the literature that a teachers' own SEL competence can determine support provided for student SEL, student use of SEL and the efficiency of SEL program implementation and delivery (Howley et al., 2021; Larsen & Samdal, 2012; Poulou, 2017; Shewark et al., 2018; Mutlu & Simsek, 2021). A teacher with a low level of social and emotional competence may struggle to guide students in improving their skills or understanding the importance of SEL in the classroom.

Teacher Expectancies and SEL

To make SEL a priority in the classroom, teachers must believe that students can overcome the post-pandemic decline in social emotional skills. Teachers' beliefs can

have a powerful impact on students by means of expectancies and subsequent related behaviors (Dusek, 1975). Indeed, Dusek (1975) established this term to distinguish between bias resulting from differential expectations artificially caused by researchers and expectancies produced by teachers themselves. The latter has been shown to relate to various student outcomes such as academic performance (Bergh et al., 2010; McKown & Weinstein, 2008), social success (Pinar & Sucuoglu, 2011), level of student aspiration (Zhu et al., 2018) and overall adaptation (Jimenez Morales & Lopez Zafra, 2013). Although, at the time, he was unaware of how teachers formed expectancies, studies have since confirmed that beliefs are one of the driving forces (Brackett et al., 2012; Pajares, 1992). Moreover, Dusek (1975) also suspected that expectancies have behavioral manifestations. His speculation that teachers' expectancies resulted in a change in teacher behavior has also been validated through subsequent research (Bergh et al., 2010; Jimenez Morales & Lopez Zafra, 2013; McKown & Weinstein, 2008; Pajares, 1992; Schultz, 2010). In fact, it is plausible that teacher expectancies about student SEL post-pandemic may result in a change in teacher behavior because of the decrease in student SEL post-pandemic. Indeed, teacher beliefs about student social and emotional skills post-pandemic and their general beliefs about SEL, may lead to the development of expectancies about the ability of students to overcome the post-pandemic decline in SEL. In turn, these expectancies may influence their willingness to implement SEL in the classroom. Should a negative expectancy be held, the neglect of SEL in the post-Covid classroom could exacerbate the adverse effects of the pandemic on student social and emotional skills and possibly hinder future psychological, behavioral, social, and academic outcomes.

Although there is an abundance of research on teacher expectancies, most authors have chosen to explore expectancies related to beliefs about academic performance (Bergh et al., 2010; McKown & Weinstein, 2008). Very little research exists on the expectancies teachers have about student social and emotional skills. One interesting exception is a study by Jimenez Morales & Lopez Zafra (2013) examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and social attitudes in students and teacher expectancies. The outcome of this research establishes that students with higher emotional intelligence scores demonstrate prosocial skills in class that create positive teacher expectancies about school adaptation and performance. In the context of the current study, it is possible that a parallel but inverse reaction may occur in post-pandemic classrooms, where students demonstrating unfavorable social skills produce negative teacher expectancies about school adaptation and performance.

In a similar study, Chandrasegaran & Padmakumari (2018) found that classroom behavior was a determining factor in teacher expectancies about student performance. Students who demonstrate positive conduct and classroom interactions generate positive expectancies, and students who demonstrate unruliness and a lack of attention and motivation provoke negative expectancies. Therefore, students who show similar negative classroom behaviors may trigger a poor post-pandemic performance expectancy in teachers.

Pinar & Sucuoglu (2011) focused on teachers' beliefs about the importance of social skills to special needs and average students' academic and social success in an inclusive classroom and the resulting expectancies. Cooperation was regarded as the most important skill for special needs students, and assertiveness ranked highest for average

students. When demonstrating their respective skills in the classroom, students were more likely to generate social and academic success expectancies. These results are again pertinent to the possible consequences of teacher beliefs about student social and emotional skills post-pandemic. Comparably, teachers may develop social and academic failure expectancies based on students' negative social behavior in the classroom. It is also possible that marginalized students may be the target of negative expectancies more frequently than privileged students, given the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on their social skills.

The aim of this study was to explore constructs that may describe teacher beliefs about SEL and SEL teaching practices. Specifically, this study employs survey question items from previously validated surveys to begin to explore how teacher expectancies, beliefs, and practices regarding SEL may be connected. This study explores experienced teacher views post-pandemic of student SEL skills pre and post pandemic. Given the strong media messages regarding learning loss, I expect teachers to report an increased concern for student SEL, but not necessarily an increase in teaching practices related to SEL.

Chapter 2.

Methods

This study was approved by the Harvard Committee on Human Subjects on March 3rd, 2023 and took place from March 19th, 2023 to May 1st, 2023.

Participants

The participants in this study included teachers that have taught in Canada and the United States for a minimum of five years. Specifically, participants taught consecutively online and/or in-person between the years 2019 and 2023; prior to and throughout the COVID pandemic. Thirty-one teachers participated in the survey and nineteen teachers completed the survey. The sample consisted of 15 females (79%) and 4 males (21%). Of the 19 teachers, 14 (73.6%) were Caucasian, one was Black (5.3%), three were Asian (15.8%) and one (5.3%) did not report their ethnic background. Participants reported both the grades and the subjects they taught before and after the pandemic. Of the 19 teachers, 54.3% taught elementary school grades pre-pandemic and 45.7% taught secondary school grades post-pandemic. Following the pandemic, 54.75% of teachers taught elementary school grades and 45.23% of teachers taught secondary school grades. The subjects taught pre-pandemic were as follows: 11 (28.95%) teachers taught literacy, five (13.16%) teachers taught numeracy, six (15.79%) teachers taught science, eight (21.05%) teachers taught social studies, two (5.26%) teachers taught physical education, one (2.63%) teacher taught art and five (13.16%) teachers taught other subjects. The subjects taught post-pandemic were as follows: nine ((29.03%) teachers taught literacy, three (9.68%) teachers taught numeracy, four (12.9%) teachers taught science, four (12.9%) teachers

taught social studies, two (6.45%) teachers taught physical education, three (9.68%)

teacher taught art and six (19.35%) teachers taught other subjects.

Table 1. Demographics

Characteristics	N	% of total sample
Gender		
Female	15	79
Male	4	21
Ethnic Background		
Caucasian	14	73.6
Asian	3	15.8
Black	1	5.3
Unknown	1	5.3
Country		
Canada	13	68.4
United-States	6	31.6
	M	SD
Age	43.3	8.6

	Pre-Pandemic		Post-Pandemic	
	N	% of sample	N	% of sample
Grades Taught				
Kindergarten	1	5.3	1	5.3
1	3	15.8	2	10.5
2	2	10.5	2	10.5
3	1	5.3	1	5.3
4	2	10.5	1	5.3
5	3	15.8	3	15.8
6	3	15.8	2	10.5
7	5	26.3	4	21.1
8	5	26.3	7	36.8
9	5	26.3	5	26.3
10	5	26.3	6	31.6
11	6	31.6	3	15.8
12	5	26.3	5	26.3
Subjects Taught				
Literacy	11	57.9	9	47.4
Numeracy	5	26.3	3	15.8
Sciences	6	31.6	4	21.1
Social Studies	8	42.1	4	21.1
Physical Education	2	10.5	2	10.5
Art	1	5.3	3	15.8
Other	5	26.3	6	31.6

Design

This study is an exploratory survey which examines patterns related to teachers'

expectancies of student SEL post-pandemic, teacher beliefs about student social and

emotional skills post-pandemic and teacher implementation of SEL in post-pandemic

classrooms. This study was conducted with a convenience sample of teachers. The survey

contained both closed and open-ended questions to allow the participants to share their

thoughts, perspectives, and beliefs about SEL.

Materials and Measures

A five-part survey (see Appendix 1) was used to gather information about the

participants and analyze the study hypothesis. Teachers provided consent for

participating in the study and voluntarily added their email to a lottery for a chance to win

a $100 Amazon gift card. A series of questions relating to pre- and post-pandemic

demographic information were included. These questions included the schools, subjects

and levels at which teachers taught pre- and post-pandemic, the number of years they

taught, their age, their ethnic background, their gender and one word which they felt

described them as a teacher.

Teacher Perceptions of SEL Pre- and Post-Pandemic. Teachers rated their past (pre-

pandemic) and current (post-pandemic) students on their social and emotional skill level

(self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible

decision-making) using a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., poor, fair, good, very good, excellent).

The difference between a teacher's pre- and post-pandemic rating was used to determine

the extent to which teacher's perceived an increase, no change, or a decline in student

20

SEL post-pandemic. An additional open-ended question allowing teachers to explain their thoughts on post-pandemic SEL was included to clarify teachers' perceptions.

Teacher SEL Beliefs. Teacher SEL beliefs were measured using pertinent sections of two existing questionnaires: The Teacher SEL Beliefs Scale (Brackett et al., 2012) and The Teacher Attitudes About Social and Emotional Learning (TASEL) questionnaire (Schultz et al., 2010). The comfort and commitment scales of the Teacher SEL Beliefs Scale was used and the competence, program effectiveness, time constraints and academic priority scales of the TASEL was used. The scale which was omitted for both questionnaires related to administrative support and does not apply to the constructs analyzed in this study. Both questionnaires used a 5-point Likert scale to determine teacher beliefs, therefore individual scores were analyzed for each belief category. The TASEL questionnaire demonstrated high reliability with Cronbach's α between .81 and .91 for all scales (Schultz et al., 2010). Similarly, Cronbach's α for all scales of The Teacher SEL Beliefs Scale were above .74 (Brackett et al., 2012).

Teacher Expectancies for Students' Abilities to Overcome Post-pandemic SEL Decline. Teachers rated the likelihood that their current students would improve their social and emotional skills over the next year using a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., extremely unlikely, unlikely, neutral, likely, extremely likely). They were asked to provide a rating that reflected students' social and emotional skills overall, combining self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. An additional open-ended question was included for teachers to explain their chosen level of expected improvement.

Implementation of SEL in the Classroom. Teachers were asked to rate the frequency with which they assigned educational, or student activities related to one or more social and emotional skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making) pre- and post-pandemic, on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., never, a few times per semester, a few times per month, a few times per week, every school day). The difference between the frequency of assigned SEL activities pre- and post-pandemic was used to determine the extent to which teacher's implementation of SEL changed in their post-pandemic classroom. Teachers were also given an opportunity to provide additional thoughts and opinions about student SEL that the survey may not have allowed them to express via a final open-ended question.

Procedure

A Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram social media post asking teachers with five or more years of teaching experience to complete a survey about student SEL post-pandemic was created and shared through my personal social media channels (Appendix 2). The post was made sharable for participants to invite others to take the survey. Participants were asked to provide informed consent by indicating approval on an electronic statement of informed consent attached to the Qualtrics survey prior to participating in the study (Appendix 3). Teachers were asked to provide information on a series of questions using a Likert-type scale, as well as open-ended questions. Providing informed consent and completing the survey took approximately 20 minutes, and participants were allowed to abandon the survey at any point. The survey was anonymous, except for those voluntarily providing an email for a chance to win a $100 Amazon gift certificate. Of the 31 surveys, 12 were incomplete and their data was not

included in the analysis since only fully completed surveys were analyzed. It is possible that some teachers abandoned the survey because of its length, however the 5 years of teaching experience criteria may have caused others to stop responding when they were required to provide pre-pandemic teaching information. Of the 12 incomplete surveys, 11 completed the consent section and did not fill out any other information. The remaining participant completed the consent section as well as the first question of the student SEL rating section.

Chapter 3.

Results

The exploratory analysis of the three research questions examined survey data through descriptive statistics with graphical representations (Tufte, 2001). A t-test was used to compare the means between teacher ratings of student SEL pre- and post-pandemic, as well as the frequency at which teachers implemented SEL pre- and post-pandemic. Open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to the dissertation's research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Pre- and Post-Pandemic SEL

To explore the first research question, a paired t-test was used to compare teachers' perceptions of student social and emotional skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making) pre- and post-pandemic. On average, teachers rated students lower on SEL post-pandemic *(M = 2.14, SE = 0.12)* than on SEL pre-pandemic *(M = 3.05, SE = 0.08)*. This difference, 0.91, BCa 95% CI [0.68, 1.15], was significant, $t(93) = 7.58$, $p = >0.0001$, and represented an effect of $d = 0.12$.
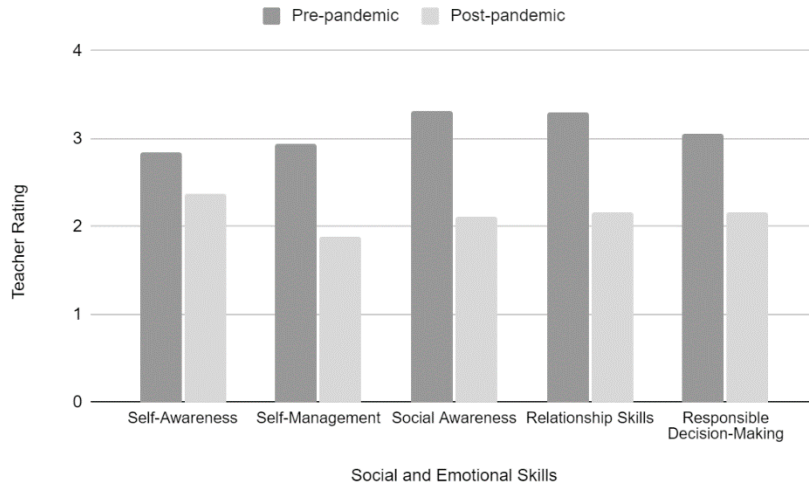
Figure 1. Teacher Rated Pre- and Post-Pandemic SEL

Note. Figure 1 shows the mean ratings of teacher perception pre- and post-pandemic rating of student social and emotional skill.

The mean score for pre-pandemic self-awareness was 2.85, meaning teachers on average perceived student self-awareness to be good. However, post-pandemic, the mean score shifted to 2.37, indicating that teachers perceived student self-awareness to be fair. This difference of 0.48 points was statistically significant. The mean score for pre-pandemic self-management was 2.95, meaning teachers on average perceived student self-awareness to be good. However, post-pandemic, the mean score shifted to 1.89, indicating teachers perceived student self-management to be poor. This difference of 1.06 points was statistically significant. The mean score for pre-pandemic social awareness was 3.32, meaning teachers on average perceived student self-awareness to be good. However, post-pandemic, the mean score shifted to 2.11, indicating teachers perceived student social awareness to be fair. This difference of 1.06 points was statistically significant. The mean score for pre-pandemic relationship skills was 3.30, meaning teachers on average perceived student self-awareness to be good. However, post-

pandemic, the mean score shifted to 2.16 indicating teachers perceived student

relationship skills to be fair. This difference of 1.14 points was statistically significant.

The mean score for pre-pandemic responsible decision-making was 3.05, meaning

teachers on average perceived student self-awareness to be good. However, post-

pandemic the mean score shifted to 2.16, indicating teachers perceived student

responsible decision-making to be fair. This difference of 0.89 points was statistically

significant.

Table 2. SEL Skills Mean Pre- and Post-Pandemic

SEL skills	Pre-pandemic Mean	Post-pandemic Mean	Difference
Self-awareness	2.85	2.37	- 0.48
Self-management	2.95	1.89	- 1.06
Social awareness	3.32	2.11	- 1.21
Relationship skills	3.30	2.16	- 1.14
Responsible decision-making	3.05	2.16	- 0.89

SEL Beliefs

To explore the second research question regarding teacher beliefs, survey data from 21

Likert survey questions were examined using descriptive statistics with graphical

representations. The Likert survey questions included four scales: comfort level with

delivering SEL instruction, commitment to learning and teaching SEL, belief that SEL

improves student learning and success, and belief that SEL is a priority of teaching and

learning.

Comfort Level with Delivering SEL Instruction.

On a scale from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree, 6 (54%) elementary

school teachers responded positively to these statements, compared to 2 (29%) secondary

school teachers. Overall, 13 (68%) teachers reported feeling comfortable in their ability to provide instruction on social and emotional learning. Similarly, 12 (60%) teachers reported feeling competent and 11 (58%) reported feeling confident in SEL lesson delivery. Fifteen (79%) respondents endorsed the notion that taking care of their students' social and emotional needs came naturally to them, and 12 (63%) agreed that informal SEL lessons were part of the regular teaching practice. A smaller percentage of teachers, 8 (42%) in total, reported that their SEL lesson delivery was effective.
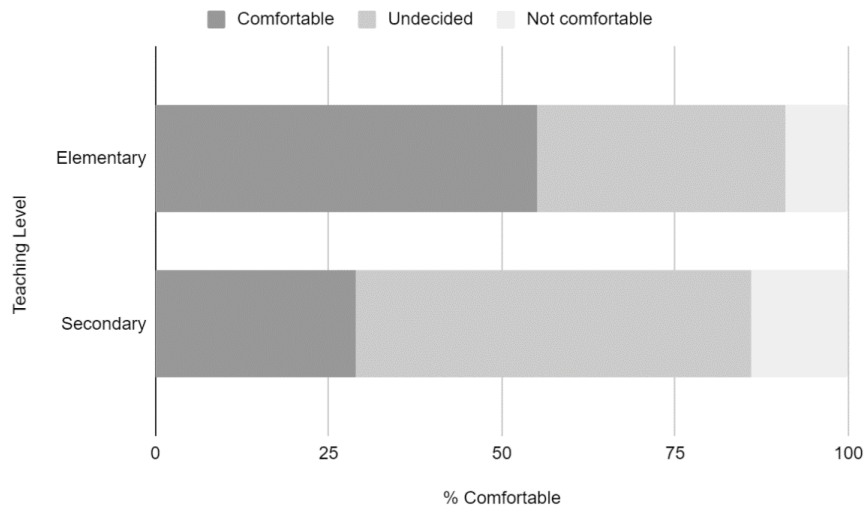
Figure 2. Teacher Comfort Level with Delivering SEL Instruction

Note. Figure 2 illustrates teacher reported current comfort level with providing SEL instruction by school level.

Commitment to Learning About and Teaching SEL.

On a scale from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree, 17 (90%) teachers reported a desire to attend a workshop that focused on the development of their student social and emotional skills. A total of 13 (68%) of teachers reported a desire to attend a

workshop that focused on the development of their personal social and emotional skills. Sixteen respondents (84%) agreed that all teachers should receive training on how to teach social and emotional skills to students. Eighteen teachers (95%) reported that they would like to improve their ability to teach social and emotional skills to students, and 12 (63%) indicated that they regularly provide informal lessons on social and emotional learning.
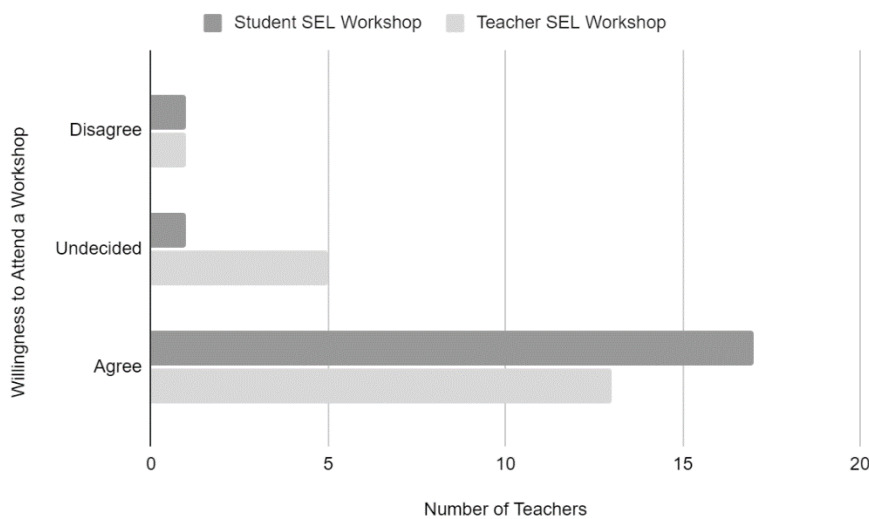
Figure 3. Willingness to Attend SEL Workshop Ratings

Note. Figure 3 illustrates teacher reported willingness to attend a workshop to develop student or personal SEL skills.

SEL Improves Student Learning and Success.

On a scale from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree, 12 (63%) teachers agreed that SEL programs were necessary for student social and emotional development. Sixteen respondents (84%) reported that SEL can help all children, regardless of their temperament, and 15 (79%) indicated that SEL could help a child with a difficult temperament. Fifteen teachers (79%) endorsed the notion that implementing SEL was

28

worth their effort, and 12 (63%) reported that SEL programs were effective in helping

children learn social and emotional skills. Ten (53%) of respondents were undecided

about whether SEL helped their students to improve their social and emotional skills.
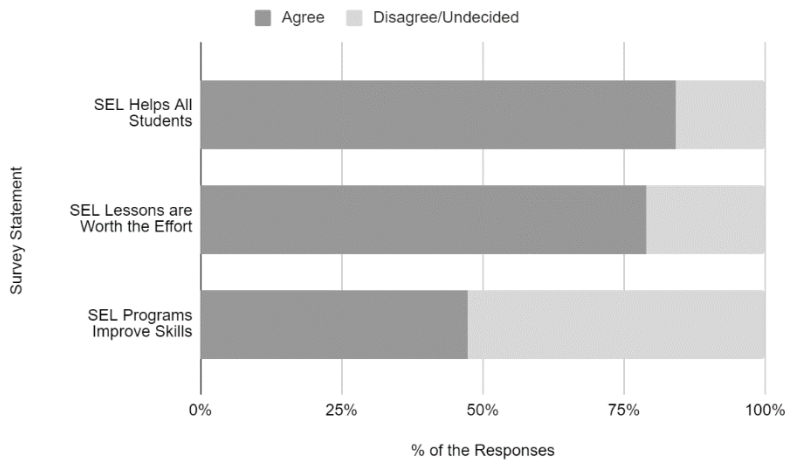
Figure 4. SEL and SEL Program Ratings

Note. Figure 4 illustrates teacher reported perceptions of the benefits of SEL and SEL classroom programs on student learning and success.

SEL as a Priority of Teaching and Learning.

Table 3 demonstrates the extent to which teachers agreed that SEL is a priority of

teaching and learning. On a scale from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree, 8

(42%) teachers reported not having enough time in the day or week to deliver social and

emotional lessons, while 4 (21%) were undecided about this statement and 7 (37%) stated

they did have the time. A similar pattern of responses was obtained when teachers were

asked if spending time on SEL lessons takes time away from academics. Ten (52%) of

teachers reported that it did, 2 (11%) were undecided and 7 (37%) reported that it did not.

Fifteen (79%) also agreed that they do not have enough time to prepare for social and

emotional lessons.

Table 3. SEL as a Priority of Teaching and Learning

Survey item	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Undecided	% Agree	% Strongly Agree
SEL takes time away from academics	10.53	26.32	10.53	47.37	5.26
No time available for SEL lesson delivery	5.26	31.58	21.05	36.84	5.26
Time available for SEL lesson planning	36.84	42.11	10.53	10.53	0

Note. Teachers rated their agreement with the statements: Spending time on social and emotional learning lessons takes time away from academics, I don't have time in the day or week to deliver social and emotional lessons, I have enough time to prepare for social and emotional learning lessons.

Teacher Expectancies

As demonstrated in Figure 5, almost half of teachers (47.4%) expected students to improve on all 5 social and emotional skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making) over the next year. The other respondents either did not expect students to improve (21.1%) or were neutral in their response (31.6%).
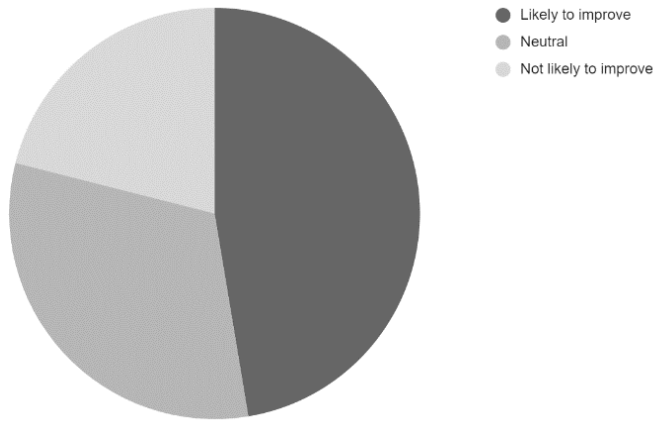
Figure 5. Teacher Expectancies

Teacher Expectancies by School Level

More than half of elementary school teachers (55%) indicated that students were likely to improve their SEL skills over the next year, while 27% were neutral in their answer and 18% reported that this was unlikely to happen. A smaller percentage of secondary school teachers (29%) responded positively to the SEL skills improvement question, while almost half (43%) were neutral in their responses.
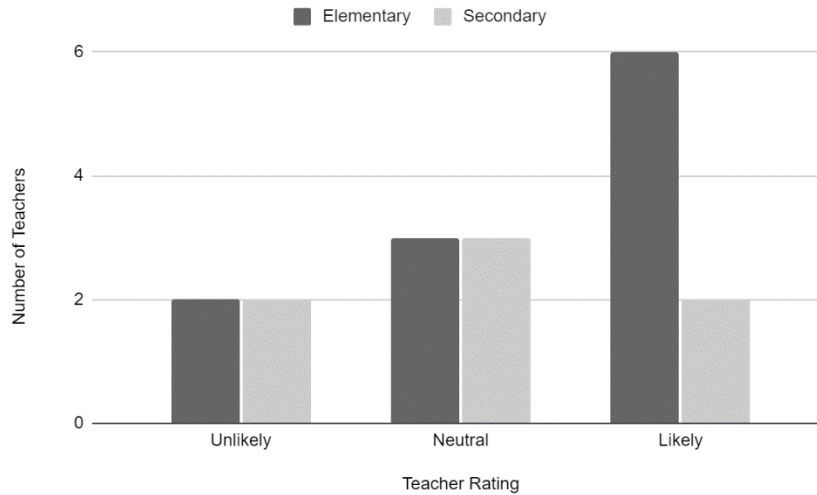
Figure 6. Teacher Expectancies by School Level

Note. Figure 6 illustrates elementary and secondary school teachers' SEL expectancy ratings.

SEL Implementation Frequency

A paired t-test was used to compare teachers' implementation of explicit SEL teaching in their pre- and post-pandemic classrooms. On average, teachers implemented explicit SEL teaching more frequently post-pandemic *(M = 3, SE = 0.32)* than pre-pandemic *(M = 2.68, SE = 0.32)*. This difference, -0.32, BCa 95% CI -[1.23, 0.60], was not significant, $t(36) = 0.6975$, $p = 0.49$, and represented an effect of $d = 0.45$.
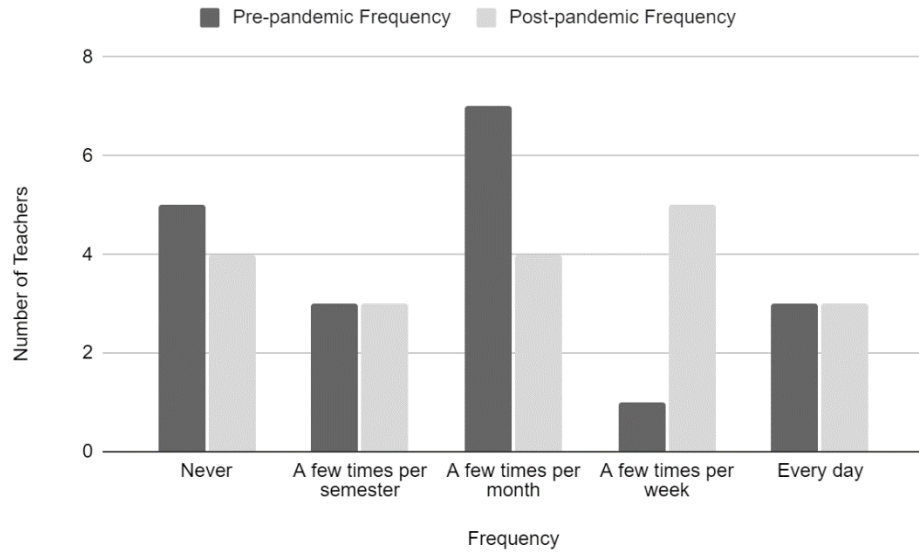
Figure 7. Frequency of Explicit SEL Teaching Pre- and Post-Pandemic

Note. Figure 7 illustrates the frequency at which teachers implemented explicit SEL lessons pre- and post-pandemic.

Overall SEL Implementation Frequency

Table 4 demonstrates the overall changes in pre- and post-pandemic frequency SEL implementation as well as by teacher, school level and age. More than half of teachers (53%) did not change the frequency of implementation of SEL in their classroom from pre- to post-pandemic. Over one third of teachers (37%) increased the frequency of implementation and 10% decreased the frequency of implementation.

SEL Implementation Frequency by School Level

Of the 19 respondents, 11 (58%) taught in an elementary school post-pandemic. Of those 11 teachers, 5 (45%) did not change the frequency of their SEL implementation, 4 (36%) increased the frequency of their SEL implementation, and 2 (18%) decreased the frequency of their SEL implementation. Of the 7 teachers (37%) teaching in a secondary school post-pandemic, 5 (71%) did not change the frequency of their SEL

implementation, 2 (29%) increased the frequency of their SEL implementation, and 0

decreased the frequency of their SEL implementation. One teacher who taught both

elementary and secondary school post-pandemic decreased the frequency of their SEL

implementation.

SEL Implementation Frequency by Age.

Of the 19 respondents, 12 were between the ages of 28 and 45. Over half of these

teachers (58%) did not change the frequency of their SEL implementation post-pandemic,

and 25% increased the frequency of their SEL implementation. The remaining 7 teachers

were between the ages of 46 and 65, and 53% increased their SEL implementation and

43% did not change the implementation of SEL in their classroom.

Table 4. SEL Implementation Frequency

SEL Implementation Frequency	% Did Not Change	% Increased	% Decreased
Overall	52.6	36.8	10.5
By school level			
Elementary	45.5	36.4	18.2
Secondary	71.4	28.6	0
By age			
28-45	58.3	25	16.7
46-65	42.9	57.1	0

Note. The number of comments provided for each question are shown in Table 5.

Thematic Analysis

Teachers who completed the survey were offered three optional open-ended

questions to elaborate on the study's first and third research questions. This enabled them

to expand on their perceptions of student SEL post-pandemic, post-pandemic SEL

development expectancies and SEL classroom implementation.

Table 5. Number of Comments Provided for Open-Ended Questions

Questions	Number of comments
What are your thoughts on student social and emotional skills post-pandemic?	16
Please explain your rating of student social and emotional skill improvement:	16
Would you like to add anything about SEL classroom implementation?	9

A thematic analysis of participant responses to the survey's open-ended questions captured three overarching themes relevant to the research questions. Teachers shared their perceptions of a change in the status of student social and emotional skills. Participant responses also revealed several factors that influenced their beliefs about SEL. Finally, the analysis revealed an interconnection between teachers' beliefs, expectations and implementation practices.

The Changing Status of Student Social and Emotional Skills

Teachers shared a perception that student SEL changed following the pandemic. Answers to the first question (13 of 16) related to post-pandemic social and emotional skills decline. Participants stated that SEL skills were "dramatically decreasing", "seemed worse", "have taken a significant hit" and "many behaviors have never been seen before". Open-ended question responses also described a large array of specific negative behaviors related to social and emotional skills. Teachers described post-pandemic students as "needing instant gratification", "disrespectful", "poor decision makers", "emotionally fragile", "unfocused", "having no concentration", "irresponsible", "having lost resilience" and "immature".

In addition, four (25%) of participants' comments related to pre- and post-pandemic SEL expressed the opinion that students with less support at home had a greater decline in SEL. They perceived students from unstable families to be handling change less appropriately. Three teachers (19%) also stated that factors such as isolation and reliance on technology decreased social skills. One participant (6%) commented that social media "overload and too much screen time" has resulted in a decreased ability to interact with others.

Multiple Factors Influence Teachers' Beliefs About SEL

Responses to the second open-ended survey question revealed many beliefs teachers hold about SEL. Some participants (3) felt that the mental health movement had begun to impact SEL in the classroom. For example, one teacher noted that "Self-care and discussions of SEL have come to the forefront since the pandemic. The more it is discussed, the more we come to see we are not alone. Strategies are shared, perspectives are opened and that is the basis of all teachings."

More often (12 comments), a teacher's beliefs about their impact on student SEL was influenced by their perception of the role of educational stakeholders such as parents, school administration, the government and students themselves. Participants' comments focused on parents' lack of contribution to student SEL. For example, one teacher commented "parents are not teaching these skills on a regular basis." They also expressed a belief that school administration and government were responsible for the presence of SEL in schools and classrooms. One participant stated that "if it's not in the curriculum, teachers won't do it."

Beliefs, Expectancies and Implementation are Interconnected

Answers to the third question demonstrated that the beliefs teachers hold about educational stakeholders also impact their expectations about student SEL development and their level of SEL implementation. Participants commented that "if the school board and the government aren't inclined to push the children, the impact of individual teachers in their classrooms is limited" and "without specific guidance on how/what to teach, it is likely that nothing will change."

Furthermore, teachers implementing SEL post-pandemic expressed positive beliefs and expectancies about student social and emotional skills. For example, one participant explained that "students are very receptive to learning new skills when the opportunity is provided." Another stated "many of my students are employing social and emotional skills within the classroom. They are often frequently asked to collaborate and troubleshoot and often need to employ these social and emotional skills."

Chapter 4.

Discussion

The integration of social and emotional learning in the classroom has become an indispensable pedagogical practice given the psychological, social, behavioral and academic benefits for students (Davies et al., 2021; Durlak et al., 2011; Haymovitz et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2021; Sandilos et al., 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, children and adolescents have experienced a considerable delay in social and emotional development and have suffered a decline in mental health (Branje et al., 2021; Jones, 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021; Trinidad, 2021). Given their prominent role in student's lives, teachers' beliefs about SEL and their expectancies for child and adolescent social and emotional growth and development post-pandemic play a crucial role in restoring these skills. Decisions teachers make about the implementation of SEL in post-pandemic classrooms may influence students' future outcomes. While there is a growing body of research exploring teachers and SEL, more research is needed on teacher perception and teaching responses to student SEL needs and strengths. Given the interruption of teaching and learning due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, this dissertation explored teacher SEL beliefs, expectancies for student SEL abilities post-pandemic, and current implementation of SEL activities through an anonymous survey with 34 questions using a Likert scale and three open-ended questions.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

The first research question explored teachers' perceptions of five student social and emotional skills pre- and post-pandemic (self-awareness, self-management,

responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness). As shown in Table 2, the results of this question demonstrate a difference in teacher reported perceptions of student SEL skills pre- and post-pandemic. A general trend of decline was observed across all skills. Research on post-pandemic student SEL supports these findings, with studies citing a decrease in emotional intelligence and social and emotional skills (Branje et al., 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021; Santibañez & Guarino, 2021). Researchers attribute this decline to increases in depressive symptoms, negative affect, anxiety and loneliness caused by the numerous disruptions to students lives as a result of the pandemic safety measures (Egan et al. 2021; Grammer et al, 2021; Martín-Requejo & Santiago-Ramajo, 2021).

Of the five social and emotional skills explored in this study, the largest differences in pre- and post-pandemic ratings were seen in social awareness and relationship skills. Teachers rated students considerably lower on both skills post-pandemic. Answers to the open-ended questions suggest that several participants perceived a decline in post-pandemic student social skills as a result of isolation and overexposure to technology. Studies confirm that social isolation played a role in the decline of child and adolescent social skills during the COVID-19 lockdowns (Grammer et al., 2021; Martín-Requejo & Santiago-Ramajo, 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021). There are mixed results regarding possible factors that may have influenced the perceived changes in student social and emotional skill development that teachers reported. For example, studies have examined the possible impact of social media and screen exposure during the pandemic on students (Caffo et al., 2021; Keles et al., 2023). However, Keles et al. (2023) cite inconsistent findings in relation to social media use and the important

perspective of adolescents who deem the social tools both beneficial and damaging to their social and emotional development. Further research is required to help clarify the role of social media in youth and adolescent social and emotional development.

In addition to social competencies, post-pandemic self-management skills were also rated lower by teachers. Along with their Likert Scale ratings, respondents included open-ended comments describing a rise in both internalizing and externalizing behaviors such as emotional fragility, disrespect, irresponsibility, and immaturity. Existing research confirms these findings. For example, parents in Egan et al.'s (2021) study on the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on young children reported their child's tantrums and clingy behaviors increased during lockdowns. In addition, research on older children and adolescents tend to report internalizing behaviors such as anxiety and depression (Branje et al., 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021). Consistent with this research, for all age groups, teachers reported a negative perception of student social and emotional skills post-pandemic.

Research Question 2

The second research question explored how teachers rate their beliefs about SEL in an educational context. Teachers rated their comfort level with teaching SEL skills in their classrooms and their commitment to learning about and teaching SEL. They also evaluated whether they thought SEL improved student learning and success. Lastly, participants considered whether they thought SEL was a priority of teaching and learning.

Comfort level with delivering SEL instruction. Research suggests that comfort and confidence in classroom SEL delivery are a major factor in the implementation of SEL instruction (Schultz et al., 2010; Zolkoski et al., 2020). The large percentage of

teachers that reported a high comfort level of SEL classroom delivery in this study seem to contradict Buchanan et al.'s (2009) results. Three quarters of the teachers in Buchanan et al. (2009) study reported being uncomfortable with SEL implementation. However, when broken down by level, respondents teaching elementary school were more likely to be comfortable delivering SEL than high school teachers, who were mostly undecided about their SEL comfort level. These findings are in line with Collie et al. (2015), who found that secondary school teachers reported lower comfort with SEL. Both Collie et al. (2015) and Poulou (2017), concluded that secondary school teachers do not have the time to develop the close relationships with students that are required for SEL instruction. This may be the case in the current study, as one survey respondent wrote, "in a high school environment, not all teaching staff have the ability to teach these strategies effectively."

Interestingly, nearly two thirds of respondents (63%) answered negatively (i.e., disagree or strongly disagree) to the statement "I deliver social and emotional lessons effectively." These answers were given regardless of whether the teacher answered negatively or positively that they were comfortable with and committed to teaching SEL. This result might signal a problem with fidelity of SEL instruction or a lack of feedback from administration following classroom SEL delivery. While creating TASEL, Schultz et al. (2010) emphasized the importance of the role administrative leaders play in supporting SEL implementation and ensuring its effectiveness. A comment by one of the teachers surveyed emphasizes this point: "Nothing will change without guidance on specifically what to teach."

Commitment to learning about and teaching SEL. Teachers responding to this survey were committed to professional development about SEL. The majority (84%) of

teachers wanted a better understanding of how to teach SEL and were willing to attend a workshop to help develop social and emotional skills in their students. However, respondents were more divided on whether they would attend a workshop to develop their own social and emotional skills. One third of teachers (32%) responded negatively to the question, "I would like to attend a workshop to develop my own social and emotional skills." This might signal that some teachers are uncomfortable working on their own SEL in a work context or perhaps they are unaware of the connection between their own SEL and the ability to teach these skills to students. They may also have felt that the question was a criticism of their teaching skills and therefore answered negatively. Larsen & Samdal (2012) have demonstrated that teachers who improve their social and emotional skills are better at managing their own stress and empathizing with students who have difficulty managing emotions and behavior. The authors have also shown that improving teacher SEL influenced student behavior, which in turn, led teachers to perceive them as calmer and more harmonious (Larsen & Samdal, 2012). Similarly, teachers in Shewark et al.'s (2018) study stated that the ability to regulate their own emotions was key to teaching SEL through modeling. Taken together, teacher professional learning and education should aim to further develop teacher understanding that building their own SEL skills in the context of their teaching role may benefit students.

SEL improves student learning and success. The answers provided by respondents in this section of the teacher beliefs portion of the survey constitute an interesting pattern. Statements relating to the general acquisition or possession of social and emotional skills were answered positively (e.g., "SEL can help all children, regardless of their

temperament" and "SEL can help a child with a difficult temperament"). However, statements relating to SEL programs garnered less enthusiasm. A substantial portion of teachers (37%) reported that, in general, programs may not be necessary or effective. Moreover, many respondents were undecided about the following statement: "Social and emotional learning has helped my students to improve their social and emotional skills." Although teachers believed that SEL was beneficial to students, they did not consistently endorse SEL programs. As with research on comfort level of SEL delivery, these results might stem from a problem with the fidelity of SEL classroom implementation or a lack of feedback from administration following SEL instruction (Schultz, 2010). However, Howley et al. (2021) and Buchanan et al. (2009) propose alternative explanations. Teachers may view parents and families as a hindrance to student SEL, which, in their opinions, renders structured school programs ineffective (Howley et al., 2021). Several comments from survey respondents support this conclusion. Teachers expressed their concern that parents were not contributing to student social and emotional development. Buchanan et al. (2009) argues that some teachers feel that student SEL is not their responsibility. At the very least, the following respondent comment demonstrates that teachers may feel that other stakeholders have more power to influence student SEL: "If the school board and the government aren't inclined to push the children, the impact of individual teachers in their classrooms is limited."

SEL as a priority of teaching and learning. To successfully implement SEL, teachers must be willing to devote time to planning, teaching and providing feedback on individual skills. Time has always been a precious commodity in the classroom, and post-pandemic education is no exception. As has been the case in previous studies (Buchanan

et al., 2009; Howley et al., 2021), a majority of teachers (90%) reported not having enough time to prepare SEL lessons. Teachers in Howley et al.'s (2021) research attributed this lack of time to the emphasis they place on planning academic learning. These findings may signal a lack of understanding of best practices for teaching social and emotional skills in a classroom context. For a SEL lesson to be effective, social and emotional skills should be integrated into an academic subject which provides it with an authentic context that is compelling to students.

Similar to the previously mentioned studies' results, just over half of teachers (53%) agreed or strongly agreed that SEL implementation detracted from time devoted to academic studies. Likewise, many felt that they did not have time in a school day to provide SEL lessons. These results may stem from the pressure teachers feel to bridge the large learning gaps created by the pandemic (Page et al., 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021).

Research Question 3

The third research question explored teacher expectancies for the future development of student SEL skills and their own plans for teaching SEL. Teachers provided a rating on the likelihood that students would improve their social and emotional skills in the following year, and the frequency of their pre- and post-pandemic SEL classroom implementation.

<u>Teacher Expectancies.</u> Overall results demonstrate that most teachers felt that students' social and emotional skills would improve over the next year. However, almost double the percentage of elementary school teachers expected students to improve on SEL skills over the next year as compared to their high school counterparts. Bridgeland et al. (2013) suggest several possible explanations for these results. First, elementary school

teachers may have had more SEL training than those teaching secondary school. Also, elementary school standards may explicitly mention SEL skills more often than secondary school standards. Finally, high school teachers may feel that SEL is less important in adolescence.

One theme revealed from optional open-ended responses that was repeated by teachers who doubted student improvement was possible in the next year was a perceived lack of power and responsibility for SEL. In their comments, teachers repeatedly mentioned parents, the school board, the government and students themselves as barriers to improving student SEL. They stated that parents were not contributing to student SEL at home and that school boards and governments were not providing teachers with guidance regarding SEL. Most notably, some teachers (29%) engaged in deficit thinking when describing students as "skirting responsibility for their behavior" and ridiculing SEL out of fear of judgment.

SEL Implementation Frequency. Overall, teachers reported similar implementation frequencies of explicitly teaching social and emotional skills in the classroom pre- and post-pandemic. They did so despite perceiving a decrease in student social and emotional skills upon students' return to school. In addition, no overall SEL instruction increase was reported despite participants' consistent responses regarding the benefit of SEL for student learning and success (84%). The number of teachers (11) who reported never teaching SEL explicitly, teaching SEL explicitly a few times per semester and teaching SEL explicitly every day stayed consistent. However, the two other subgroups reported changes to their SEL implementation frequency. The group of teachers teaching SEL explicitly a few times per month pre-pandemic decreased their

SEL teaching frequency, and the group of teachers teaching SEL explicitly a few times per week increased their SEL teaching frequency (Figure 9). It is possible that pandemic effects did not influence teaching practices if teachers were situated at either extreme of the SEL implementation frequency continuum but brought about changes to the behaviors of teachers who were not as consistent in their implementation. Research has shown that teachers who hold stronger beliefs about SEL are more consistent in their implementation as opposed to those who are undecided about the practice (Brackett et al., 2012; Howley et al., 2021)

In addition, many of the teachers that sustained a low frequency of SEL lessons post-pandemic also indicated that academics were a priority and classroom time did not allow for teaching social and emotional skills. Moreover, the teachers that did report an increase in SEL implementation frequency post-pandemic were mostly over the age of 46. There is a possibility that years of experience teaching or general maturity may account for this change in practice. Seasoned teachers may be more adept at perceiving their students' needs and at changing their teaching practice accordingly.

Participants also reported other factors that influenced the frequency at which they delivered SEL lessons. Some teachers changed roles after the pandemic, and this created an opportunity to better integrate SEL into their teaching practice. Given changes in students' behaviors, others saw more frequent occasions to use SEL authentically, in response to a specific school or classroom situation. Finally, one teacher's school implemented a mandatory school wide SEL program.

This study explored teacher perception of student SEL skills and SEL teaching practices. Survey responses suggested that teachers perceived a decline in student social

and emotional skills post-pandemic. Survey participants indicated a variety of beliefs about their level of comfort and commitment to SEL. In addition, they expressed their thoughts on SEL as a priority in the classroom and its impact on student learning and success. Given the impact of these beliefs on their expectancies for student social and emotional growth and SEL classroom implementation, further research is needed.

Theoretical and Research Implications

Evidence for post-pandemic SEL decline in students is increasing in the research on the impact of COVID-19 on children and adolescents (Grammer et al., 2021; Salmela-Aro et al., 2021). Confirming this trend, teachers in this study self-reported perceptions of a post-pandemic decline in student SEL skills. In addition, the extant literature provides compelling evidence that SEL offers a host of benefits to students. Teachers strongly agreed with survey items related to SEL promoting student learning. Despite study participants confirming the need for SEL and its positive effects on students, teachers were not convinced that their students had benefited from SEL or that they delivered SEL effectively in their classrooms. Further research should examine the gap between the theory and research on SEL programs, teacher beliefs, and teacher SEL implementation. This study begins to illuminate the need for support for teaching SEL programs, while fulfilling the needs of both teachers and students to ensure consistent application in classrooms.

Along with issues relating to the perception of effective SEL delivery in the classroom, this study has highlighted at least two important gaps between elementary and secondary school teachers' perceptions and beliefs. Elementary school teachers provided more positive responses for SEL classroom delivery comfort levels and expectancies for

future student SEL. However, more than two thirds (71%) of secondary teachers responded negatively to one or more statements regarding SEL delivery comfort and 72% answered negatively or neutrally about expectancies for future student SEL. Given that research suggests that secondary school teachers may be more reluctant to implement SEL and are more skeptical about student SEL improvement (Collie et al., 2015; Poulou, 2017), future research should examine the nature of secondary educator beliefs, perceptions and expectancies regarding adolescents SEL.

Future research could examine possible contesting relationships between educator beliefs, their own SEL skills, and their teaching practices. In addition. research might examine teacher evaluation of SEL curriculum, both explicit SEL activities and implicit SEL embedded in learning activities across the curriculum to better understand what criteria teachers use to evaluate curriculum effectiveness and student learning.

Practical Implications for Educators

Although there exists a vast body of research on successful strategies, methods and approaches for integrating SEL into the curriculum (Byrd, 2020; Richards, 2023), both this study and prior research highlight teachers' conceptualization of SEL as distinct and separate from the curriculum (Byrd, 2020; Jomaa et al., 2023). Teachers continually prioritize academic learning and emphasize the lack of classroom time for teaching SEL. For SEL to become a priority in classrooms, it will be important for educators to focus on creating lessons, units and assessments that explicitly integrate social and emotional skills in contexts that are authentic and meaningful to students. This will decrease SEL lesson delivery time while also improving student psychological, social, emotional and behavioral outcomes in post-COVID classrooms.

In addition to integrating SEL into academic subjects, educators should consider developing their personal SEL skills. Modeling social and emotional competencies in the classroom provides a relevant example to students who struggle to develop these skills on their own. Furthermore, an increase in social and emotional skills will help educators further understand and support students' regulations of their emotional states and accurately teach social and emotional competencies in the classroom.

Research Limitations

This study was limited by its exploratory nature. The findings were restricted to the study's small sample of primarily female Caucasian participants. Moreover, results in this study were not conclusive as no relationships or causality between variables can be drawn.

Furthermore, as with most survey designs, this study was limited to information reported by the participants themselves. Whether because of social desirability bias or a lack of memory accuracy, reported SEL implementation may not correspond to the actual implementation level. Similarly, although the self-reported attitudes and beliefs measured may imply expectancies, this study was limited by one data source, self-reported survey. However, the online survey provided enough information to inform future larger studies that may include a broader data set, for example, parent and student perceptions as well as classroom observations.

Most importantly, participants in this study were asked to rate the level of social and emotional skills of their student pre- and post-pandemic. Teachers had to remember general student behavior that occurred several years in the past, and their rating may therefore be inaccurate. In addition, comparing student pre- and post-pandemic behavior

may have introduced bias based on the previous order of responses. A positive or negative answer pertaining to student pre-pandemic behavior may have influenced the direction of an answer pertaining to student post-pandemic behavior. Even with this limitation, memories of the past are relevant in how teachers perceived current student responses, framed their own feelings, and carried out teaching activities.

In addition, the way in which SEL was defined and the opportunities to implement related social and emotional skills curriculum may have differed between participants and the researcher. For example, although teachers were asked to rate students based on the CASEL definition of social and emotional skills, SEL implementation in their classroom may be based on different skills. Differences in definitions could mean that teachers under or over reported SEL implementation. For this reason, findings did not make statistical comparative inferences.

Finally, the study was limited by the size of the research team and anonymous surveys made it impossible to member check the findings. The study design and results are limited by the perspectives and experiences on a one-member research team. Further, the anonymous survey prohibited the possibility of confirming the findings with participating teachers. In addition, teachers with particular viewpoints may have been inclined to respond to the survey. Future studies might expand the research team to bring in different perspectives and add an interview component to increase the trustworthiness of the interpretations of the findings.

Future Research

The results of this study justify future research on the impact of the pandemic on teacher expectancies of student outcomes in relation to SEL. Teacher beliefs about SEL and their

impact on SEL expectancies should be explored through more direct methods in order to establish the nature of the relationship between these variables. Furthermore, research on teacher beliefs about SEL should focus on the reasons why teachers perceived limited usefulness of SEL programs. Determining and eliminating the barriers to effective implementation of SEL programs may help teachers to see the value of consistent SEL in the classroom and consequently help improve student outcomes. Lastly, the divergent beliefs and practices related to SEL and classroom implementation of SEL of elementary and high school teachers should be explored more closely. Studies identifying the limitations specific to secondary school teachers' SEL beliefs and implementation practices may help to find solutions to the discrepancies reported in this study and the relevant literature. Indeed, consideration of these topics may help uncover the mechanisms by which post-Covid classrooms may help teachers develop student SEL.

Appendix 1.

Survey

This survey seeks to understand teachers' beliefs about student social and emotional learning (SEL) post-pandemic and their SEL classroom activities. Understanding teacher's thoughts and perspectives about student SEL is crucial in determining post-pandemic classroom needs. Participants providing a valid email will be included in a draw to win a $100 Amazon gift card.

For the purpose of this survey, student social and emotional learning will be defined as including the following social and emotional skills:

Self-awareness: The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. This includes capacities to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose.

Self-management: The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations. This includes the capacities to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel motivation and agency to accomplish personal and collective goals.

Social awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. This includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Relationship skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed.

Responsible decision-making: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. This includes the capacities to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being.

(All SEL definitions are taken from the [Collaborative Association for Social and Emotional Learning](#))

School Context Pre-Pandemic

Name the school at which you taught in 2019

In which city was the school at which you taught in 2019

Grade level(s) taught in 2019 (Check all that apply)

Pre-kindergarten

Kindergarten

Grade 1

Grade 2

Grade 3

Grade 4

Grade 5

Grade 6

Grade 7

Grade 8

Grade 9

Grade 10

Grade 11

Grade 12

Subject(s) taught in 2019 (Check all that apply)

Literacy

Numeracy

Sciences

Social Studies

Physical Education

Art

Other

Teacher Perceptions of SEL Pre-Pandemic

Overall, how would you rate your past students on self-awareness, the abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts (this includes capacities to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose) pre-pandemic:

Self-awareness: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 - Excellent

Overall, how would you rate your past students on self-management, the abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations (this includes the capacities to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel motivation and agency to accomplish personal and collective goals) pre-pandemic:

Self-management: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 - Excellent

Overall, how would you rate your past students on social awareness, the abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts (this includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports) pre-pandemic:

Social awareness: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 - Excellent

Overall, how would you rate your past students on relationship skills, the abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups (this includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem-solve and negotiate

conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed) pre-pandemic:

Relationship Skills: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 - Excellent

Overall, how would you rate your past students on responsible decision-making, the abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations (this includes the capacities to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being) pre-pandemic:

Responsible Decision-Making: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 – Excellent

School Context Post-Pandemic

Name the school at which you are currently teaching

In which city is the school at which you are currently teaching

Grade level(s) you are currently teaching (Check all that apply)

Pre-kindergarten

Kindergarten

Grade 1

Grade 2

Grade 3

Grade 4

Grade 5

Grade 6

Grade 7

Grade 8

Grade 9

Grade 10

Grade 11

Grade 12

Subject(s) you are currently teaching (Check all that apply)

Literacy

Numeracy

Sciences

Social Studies

Physical Education

Art

Other

Teacher perceptions of SEL post-pandemic

Overall, how would you rate your present students on self-awareness, the abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts (this includes capacities to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose) post-pandemic:

Self-awareness: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 - Excellent

 Overall, how would you rate your present students on self-management, the abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations (this includes the capacities to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel motivation and agency to accomplish personal and collective goals) post-pandemic:

Self-management: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 - Excellent

Overall, how would you rate your present students on social awareness, the abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts (this includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports) post-pandemic:

Social awareness: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 – Excellent

Overall, how would you rate your present students on relationship skills, the abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups (this includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem-solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed) post-pandemic:

Relationship Skills: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 - Excellent

Overall, how would you rate your present students on responsible decision-making, the abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations (this includes the capacities to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being) post-pandemic:

Responsible decision-making: 1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Very good 5 - Excellent

What are your thoughts on student social and emotional skills post-pandemic?

SEL Beliefs

 The following statements explore your teaching practices and beliefs.

Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:

I feel confident in my ability to provide instruction on social and emotional learning.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I am comfortable providing instruction on social and emotional skills to my students.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

Taking care of my students' social and emotional needs comes naturally to me.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

Informal lessons in social and emotional learning are part of my regular teaching practice.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I would like to attend a workshop to learn how to develop my students' social and emotional skills.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I would like to attend a workshop to develop my own social and emotional skills.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I want to improve my ability to teach social and emotional skills to students.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

All teachers should receive training on how to teach social and emotional skills to students.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I deliver SEL lessons effectively.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I feel competent teaching SEL lessons

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I understand the goals of SEL

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I have thorough knowledge of SEL lessons.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I think group lessons are a good way to promote social–emotional learning.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

SEL programs are effective in helping children learn social and emotional skills.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

It is worth my effort to implement SEL lessons.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

SEL has helped my children to improve their social and emotional skills.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

SEL can help all kids regardless of their temperament.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

SEL will help a child with a difficult temperament.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

To address their social and emotional development, children need SEL programs.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

Spending time on SEL lessons takes time away from academics.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I don't have time in the day or week to deliver SEL lessons.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

I have enough time to prepare for SEL lessons.

Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Undecided - Agree - Strongly Agree

Teacher expectancies

Considering all 5 social and emotional skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making), do you expect students to improve on these skills over the next year?

I expect it it: Extremely unlikely – unlikely – Neutral – likely – Extremely likely

Please explain your rating of student social and emotional skill improvement:

SEL Implementation

How often, prior to the pandemic, did you explicitly assign educational lessons, or student activities related to one or more of the 5 SEL focus areas (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making)?

I assigned lessons or activities: Never - A few times per semester - A few times per month - A few times per week - Every day

 How often, after the pandemic, have you explicitly assigned educational lessons, or student activities related to one or more of the 5 SEL focus areas (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making)?

I assigned lessons or activities: Never - A few times per semester - A few times per

month - A few times per week - Every day

Would you like to add anything about SEL classroom implementation?

Demographics

Age

Ethnic Background

Gender

Appendix 2.

Social Media Post

Experienced teachers needed!

I am a Harvard Extension School Master of Liberal Arts candidate conducting a study on student social and emotional learning post-pandemic. If you are a teacher with 5 or more years of experience teaching, and you would like a chance to win a $250 dollars Amazon gift certificate in exchange for 20 minutes of your time, and your opinions on student social and emotional learning, please click the link below.

Appendix 3.

Consent Form

The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether to be a part of this study. More detailed information is listed later in this form.

Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?

We invite you to take part in a research study because you are a teacher with 5 or more years of experience teaching, and you have important knowledge and opinions on student social and emotional learning.

What should I know about a research study?

- Whether or not you take part is up to you.

- Your participation is completely voluntary.

- You can choose not to take part.

- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.

- Your decision will not be held against you.

- Your refusal to participate will not result in any consequences or any loss of benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

Why is this research being done?

Given the impact of the pandemic on students, it is important to understand teachers' beliefs about social and emotional learning (SEL) and the impact of those beliefs on their SEL classroom activities. This research seeks to answer the following questions: what are teachers' beliefs about SEL, and what perceptions do they have of students' social and emotional skills, post-pandemic? Will these beliefs determine teachers' expectancies about student social and emotional skill growth and development in the coming years and their implementation of SEL in the post-pandemic classroom?

How long will the research last and what will I need to do?

We expect that you will be in this research study for 20 minutes.
You will be asked to answer a variety of questions in relation to student social and emotional learning and classroom activities related to social and emotional learning.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

We don't believe there are any risks from participating in this research.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

There are no benefits to you from your taking part in this research. We cannot promise any benefits to others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits to others include an understanding of how to begin to rebuild post-pandemic classrooms.

<u>Detailed Information</u>

The following is more detailed information about this study in addition to the information listed above.

<u>What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?</u>

You can leave the research at any time; it will not be held against you. All data collected up to the point of withdrawal will be destroyed.

<u>If I take part in this research, how will my privacy be protected? What happens to the information you collect?</u>

Your information will not be used or distributed for future research studies, even if all your identifiers are removed.

Lottery – *If you agree to take part in this research study, and provide an email address, we will enter you into a lottery.*

- *One $100 Amazon gift certificate will be awarded*

- *The drawing will occur once the research study has ended*

- *The participant who is awarded a gift certificate will be notified by email*

<u>Who can I talk to?</u>

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at jodussiaume@gmail.com

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Harvard University Area

Institutional Review Board ("IRB"). You may talk to them at (617) 496-2847 or

cuhs@harvard.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

References

Ahmed, I., Hamzah, A. B., & Abdullah, M. N. L. Y. B. (2020). Effect of social and emotional learning approach on students' social-emotional competence. *International Journal of Instruction, 13*(4), 663–676. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13441a

Babalis, T., Tsoli, K., Artikis, C. T., Mylonakou-Keke, I., & Xanthakou, Y. (2013). The impact of social and emotional learning programs on the emotional competence and academic achievement of children in Greek primary school. *World Journal of Education, 3*(6), 54. https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v3n6p54

Bhatnagar, R., & Many, J. (2022). Teachers using social emotional learning: Meeting student needs during COVID-19. *International Journal of Technology in Education (IJTE), 5*(3), 518-534. https://doi.org/10.46328/ijte.310

Bergh, L. van den, Denessen, E. J. P., Hornstra, T., Voeten, M. J. & Holland, R. (2010). The implicit prejudiced attitudes of teachers: Relations to teacher expectations and the ethnic achievement gap. *American Educational Research Journal, 47*(2), 497–527. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831209353594

Bierman, K. L., Coie, J. D., Dodge, K. A., Greenberg, M. T., Lochman, J. E., McMahon, R. J., & Pinderhughes, E. (2010). The effects of a multiyear universal social-emotional learning program. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 78*(2), 156–168. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018607

Bond, J. B., (2020). Social-emotional learning in a time of Chaos. *International Dialogues on Education, 7*(1/2), 87. https://doi.org/10.53308/ide.v7i1/2.28

Brackett, M. A., Reyes, M. R., Rivers, S. E., Elbertson, N. A., & Salovey, P. (2012). Assessing teachers' beliefs about social and emotional learning. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment, 30*(3), 219–236. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282911424879

Branje, S., Morris, A. S., Leerstoel Branje, Adolescent development: Characteristics determinants, & Utrecht University Library. (2021). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent emotional, social, and academic adjustment. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 31*(3), 486–499. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12668

Braun, & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Hariharan, A. (2013). The missing piece: A national teacher survey on how social and emotional learning can empower children and transform schools. *A report for CASEL*. Civic Enterprises. https://casel.org/the-missing-piece/

Buchanan, R., Gueldner, B. A., Tran, O. K., & Merrell, K. W. (2009). Social and emotional learning in classrooms: A survey of teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and practices. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 25*(2), 187–203. https://doi.org/10.1080/15377900802487078

Byrd, M. (2020). Capitalizing on Differences: Keys to Unlocking the Academic Achievement Gap. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching, 15*(2). https://doi.org/10.1515/mlt-2019-0003

Caffo, E., Asta, L., & Scandroglio, F. (2021). Predictors of mental health worsening among children and adolescents during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 34*(6), 624–630 https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000747

Chandrasegaran, J., & Padmakumari, P. (2018). The role of self-fulfilling prophecies in education: Teacher-student perceptions. *i-Manager's Journal on Educational Psychology, 12*(1), 8. https://doi.org/10.26634/jpsy.12.1.14639

Collie, R. J., Shapka, J. D., Perry, N. E., & Martin, A. J. (2015). Teachers' beliefs about social-emotional learning: Identifying teacher profiles and their relations with job stress and satisfaction. *Learning and Instruction, 39*, 148–157. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2015.06.002

Davies, E. S., Frey, J., & Cooper, G. (2021). Evaluation of a school-led sustainable class wide intervention programme to improve elementary children's social emotional and academic performance. *International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education, 68*(4), 496–520. https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2019.1695756

Deli, W., Kaur, A., & Awang-Hashim, R. (2021). Who delivers it and how it is delivered: Effects of social-emotional learning interventions on learning anxiety and dropout intention. *Malaysian Journal of Learning & Instruction, 18*(Number 1), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2021.18.1.1

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 405–432. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x

Dusek. J. B. (1975). Do Teachers Bias Children's Learning? *Review of Educational Research, 45*(4), 661–684. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543045004661

Egan, S., M., Pope, J., Moloney, M., Hoyne, C., & Beatty, C. (2021). Missing early education and care during the pandemic: The socio-emotional impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young children. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 49*(5), 925–934. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01193-2

Grammer, J., Matusz, P., van Atteveldt, N., Martín-Requejo, K., & Santiago-Ramajo, S. (2021). Reduced emotional intelligence in children Aged 9–10 caused by the

COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. *Mind, Brain, and Education, 15*(4), 269–272. https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12297

Green, A., Ferrante, S., Boaz, T. L., Kutash, K., & Wheeldon-Reece, B. (2021). Social and emotional learning during early adolescence: Effectiveness of a classroom-based SEL program for middle school students. *Psychology in the Schools, 58*(6), 1056–1069. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22487

Haymovitz, E., Houseal-Allport, P., Lee, R. S., & Svistova, J. (2018). Exploring the perceived benefits and limitations of a school-based social–emotional learning program: A concept map evaluation. *Children & Schools, 40*(1), 45–54. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdx029

Howley, D., Shen, Y., Baek, S., & Dyson, B. (2021). Educators' experiences of establishing social and emotional learning pedagogies in an elementary school with at-risk students. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 13*(5), 625–638. https://doi.org/10.26822/iejee.2021.217

Jimenez Morales, M. I. & Lopez Zafra, E. (2013). The impact of students' perceived emotional intelligence, social attitudes, and teacher expectations on academic performance. *Revista electrónica de investigación psicoeducativa y psicopedagógica, 11*(1), 75–98.

Jomaa, Duquette, C., & Whitley, J. (2023). Elementary Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences Regarding Social-Emotional Learning in Ontario. *Brock Education, 32*(1), 9–37. https://doi.org/10.26522/brocked.v32i1.948

Jones, J. M., (2021). The Dual Pandemics of COVID-19 and Systemic Racism: Navigating Our Path Forward. *School Psychology, 36*(5), 427–431. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000472

Keles, B., Grealish, A., & Leamy, M. (2023). The beauty and the beast of social media: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the impact of adolescents' social media experiences on their mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Current Psychology* (New Brunswick, N.J.), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04271-3

Kim, S., Crooks, C. V., Bax, K., & Shokoohi, M. (2021). Impact of trauma-informed training and mindfulness-based social–emotional learning program on teacher attitudes and burnout: A mixed-methods study. *School Mental Health, 13*(1), 55–68. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-020-09406-6

Larsen, T. & Samdal, O. (2012). The importance of teachers' feelings of self-efficacy in developing their pupils' social and emotional learning: A Norwegian study of teachers' reactions to the Second Step program. *School Psychology International, 33*(6), 631–645. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034311412848

Li, L., Flynn, K. S., DeRosier, M. E., Weiser, G., & Austin-King, K. (2021). Social-emotional learning amidst COVID-19 school closures: Positive findings from an efficacy study of "Adventures Aboard the S.S. GRIN" program. *Frontiers in Education* (Lausanne), 6. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.683142

Marsh, J. A. & Kennedy, K. (2020). Possibilities and challenges: Conditions shaping educators' use of social-emotional learning indicators. *Teachers College Record, 122*(14), 1-28. https://doi-org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1177/016146812012201409

Martín-Requejo, K., & Santiago-Ramajo, S. (2021). Reduced Emotional Intelligence in Children Aged 9–10 caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown. *Mind, Brain, and Education, 15*(4), 269–272. https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12297

McKown, C. & Weinstein, R. S. (2008). Teacher expectations, classroom context, and the achievement gap. *Journal of School Psychology, 46*(3), 235–261. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2007.05.001

Morgan, L., Close, S., Siller, M., Kushner, E., & Brasher, S. (2022). Teachers' experiences: Social emotional engagement - knowledge and skills. *Educational Research (Windsor), 64*(1), 41–59. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2021.1988865

Murdock-Perriera, L. A. & Sedlacek, Q. C. (2018). Questioning Pygmalion in the twenty-first century: the formation, transmission, and attributional influence of teacher expectancies. *Social Psychology of Education, 21*(3), 691–707. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-018-9439-9

Mutlu, G. & Şimsek, İ. (2021). Associations between teachers' interpersonal behavior and students' socio-emotional learning skills in social sciences classrooms in Turkey. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research, 8*(3), 119. https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.942396

Neth, E. L., Caldarella, P., Richardson, M. J., & Heath, M. A. (2020). Social-emotional learning in the middle grades: A mixed-methods evaluation of the Strong Kids program. RMLE Online: *Research in Middle Level Education, 43*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2019.1701868

Pajares. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307–332. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543062003307

Page, E., Leonard-Kane, R., Kashefpakdel, E., Riggall, A., & Guerriero, S. (2021). *Learning loss, learning gains and wellbeing: A rapid evidence assessment. In Education Development Trust*. Education Development Trust.

Poulou, M. S., (2017). An examination of the relationship among teachers' perceptions of social-emotional learning, teaching efficacy, teacher-student interactions, and

students' behavioral difficulties. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology, 5*(2), 126–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2016.1203851

Pinar, E. S. & Sucuoglu, B. (2011). Turkish teachers' expectancies for success in inclusive classrooms. Educational Sciences: *Theory & Practice, 11*(1), 395–402.

Richards, T. (2023). Reimagining the classroom: *Creating new learning spaces and connecting with the world* (First edition.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Salmela-Aro, K., Upadyaya, K., Vinni-Laakso, J. & Hietaj€arvi, L. (2021). Adolescents' longitudinal school engagement and burnout before and during COVID-19: The role of Socio-emotional skills. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 31*(3), 796–807. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12654

Sandilos, Goble, P., & Schwartz, S. (2020). Burnout and teacher-child interactions: The moderating influence of SEL interventions in Head Start classrooms. *Early Education and Development, 31*(7), 1169–1185 https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2020.178833

Santibañez, L. & Guarino, C. M. (2021). The effects of absenteeism on academic and social-emotional outcomes: Lessons for COVID-19. *Educational Researcher, 50*(6), 392–400. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X21994488

Schultz, D., Ambike, A., Stapleton, L. M., Domitrovich, C. E., Schaeffer, C. M., & Bartels, B. (2010). Development of a questionnaire assessing teacher perceived support for and attitudes about social and emotional learning. *Early Education and Development, 21*(6), 865–885. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409280903305708

Shewark, E. A., Zinsser, K. M., & Denham, S. A. (2018). Teachers' perspectives on the consequences of managing classroom climate. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 47*(6), 787–802. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-018-9461-2

Singh, S., Roy, D., Sinha, K., Parveen, S., Sharma, G., & Joshi, G. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on mental health of children and adolescents: A narrative review with recommendations. *Psychiatry Research*, 293, 113429–113429. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113429

Teeters, L. A. P., McKimmy, C., Shedro, M., Ashar, Y. K., Alvarez, A., Price, E. C., & Dimidjian, S. (2021). Teaching as mediation: Exploring the impacts of a teacher training program on generating social and emotional learning environments. *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators, 10*(1), 25.

Timmons, K., Cooper, A., Bozek, E., & Braund, H. (2021). The impacts of COVID-19 on early childhood education: Capturing the unique challenges associated with remote teaching and learning in K-2. *Early Childhood Education Journal 49*(1), 887–90. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01207-z

Trinidad, J. E., (2021). Equity, engagement, and health: school organisational issues and priorities during COVID-19. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 53*(1), 67–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2020.1858764

Tufte, E. R. (2001). *The visual display of quantitative information* (Vol. 2, p. 9). Cheshire, CT: Graphics press.

UNESCO UIS. (2021, November 8). Retrieved September 22, 2022, from http://uis.unesco.org/ *What is the Casel Framework?* CASEL. (2022, August 3). Retrieved September 8, 2022, from https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/

Zhu, M., Urhahne, D., & Rubie-Davies, C. M. (2018). The longitudinal effects of teacher judgement and different teacher treatment on students' academic outcomes. *Educational Psychology (Dorchester-on-Thames), 38*(5), 648–668. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2017.1412399

Zieher, A. K., Cipriano, C., Meyer, J. L., & Strambler, M. J. (2021). Educators' implementation and use of social and emotional learning early in the COVID-19 pandemic. *School Psychology, 36*(5), 388–397. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000461

Zolkoski, S. M., Aguilera, S. E., West, E. M., Miller, G. J., Holm, J. M., Sass, S. M., &. Stocks, Eric. L. (2020). Teacher perceptions of skills, knowledge, and resources needed to promote social and emotional learning in rural classrooms. *The Rural Educator, 41*(3), 1-11. https: doi.org/10.35608/ruraled.v41i3.1098