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Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills

Monday, December 5, 2016

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If you do intend to write for your own organization either whilst you're here or after the session, please make sure to observe the **Chatham House Rule** (information on which is in your Welcome Pack). If you're in any doubt, do not hesitate to contact Louise.

We'll be updating our website with summaries from the panels and interviews with our Fellows, all of which you can find on the session page: www.SalzburgGlobal.org/go/566

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We will also be posting photos to Instagram www.instagram.com/SalzburgGlobal, and we encourage you to do so also, using the hashtag [#SGSedu](https://twitter.com/SGSedu).



"Fascinating opening remarks on Day 1 has Session 566 off to a great start." Thanks to Heinrich Dirk for this shot!



Catherine Millett, Michael Nettles and Koji Miyamoto

Social and emotional investment

"Investing in social and emotional learning is just as important as investing in cognitive skills," declared Koji Miyamoto, senior economist at the World Bank's Education Global Practice, at the opening of the session *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*.

With emotional intelligence considered by the World Economic Forum to be one of the top ten most desirable skills for jobs in 2020, Miyamoto's statement will likely be adopted by many more people.

Improving students' SEL skills positively impacts not only the students' development but also society-at-large. As Michael T. Nettles, senior vice president of ETS stated in his opening remarks [see overleaf for remarks in full], "Being a good, empathic, thoughtful, even-tempered person able to work with others will make you happier, healthier, and more productive." (He followed up with the American expression "Duh!")

Research shows that SEL contributes to better self-esteem, mental health and stress management; better classroom behavior; greater success throughout schooling, from pre-K to graduate school; and even reducing crime rates.

SEL might not be a topic that makes

the headlines, but poor SEL influences many global issues from prejudice towards migrants and refugees to international conflicts.

Given the benefits of SEL, educators are now considering how best to assess and improve these skills, but as one Fellow put it: "There's a reason why these skills are known as 'hard to measure skills.'" As schools and students start to suffer from "assessment fatigue," policymakers will have a tough job convincing them to carry out yet more testing.

In formulating these assessments, contextual differences, such as diversity in cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds, will need to be carefully considered and addressed. "The science has to be equitable," added Nettles.

Improving SEL necessitates inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary, and even international collaboration, drawing on expertise from not only education, but also psychology and neuroscience, among others. Over the course of five days, an eclectic cohort of 40 Fellows from 19 countries will now consider the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL), the possibilities of how to measure and improve it, and how to move it up global policy agendas.



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Why the “Whole Child” Matters

Senior Vice President of ETS and multi-time Salzburg Global Fellow on measuring social and emotional learning

Michael T. Nettles

I am delighted to see so many familiar faces – and also so many unfamiliar faces! It is great to be with old friends, and it is great to make new friends, also known as Allies in the Cause.

And it is a good cause! I would characterize our goal over the next few days as coming up with new ways to make students better people – better friends, better sons and daughters, better co-workers, better citizens, and of course better students – by developing their social and emotional skills. Social and emotional learning, or SEL, involves going beyond development of students’ cognitive skills to develop what is sometimes referred to as “the whole child.”

I like how our friend and colleague Andreas Schleicher, the Director for Education and Skills at the OECD, put it in one of his excellent blog entries on the Huffington Post last year:

Common sense tells us that social and emotional skills – such as perseverance, self-control or agreeableness – help individuals have more fulfilling lives. People who persevere and work hard are more likely to succeed in a highly dynamic and skill-driven labor market. Those who work hard are more likely to follow healthier lifestyles and remain fit. Individuals who are capable of coping with their emotions and adapting to change are more likely to cope with job loss, family disintegration or crime. And of course, social and emotional skills matter because they help develop and enforce cognitive skills. Children with self-control, for example, are more likely to finish reading a book, to complete a difficult maths problem or to follow through a science project.

That is as good an argument and as comprehensive a summary as I have seen as to why social and emotional learning matters. I am not surprised, given that the OECD is a leader in this research, which includes an international longitudinal study of skills development in major cities around the world. It is sure to advance the cause of social and emotional learning.

I do not want to spend too much time persuading you of the importance of SEL research and interventions.

Presumably, you are already persuaded and would not be here otherwise. But I do want to articulate what I presume is a shared belief – namely, that we are each here because we each believe that the success of our communities, our countries, and our infinitely diverse global society depends on one simple thing: our ability to get along with one another, whether in the playroom, the classroom, the workplace, the checkout line, the subway, and the public square. Perhaps most importantly, we have to get along with ourselves. As our friend and colleague from an earlier era, put it, “All of man’s misfortune comes from one thing, which is not knowing how to sit quietly in a room.”

If that is true, then far too few of us know how to sit quietly in our rooms. The world is a very troubled place.

Are we patient? Are we respectful? Are we tolerant of our differences in appearance, values, belief, habits and behavior? Do we persevere through adversity, and even failure? Can we empathize with the suffering of others? Are we able to work collaboratively and creatively toward shared goals? Can we keep our tempers in check, more or less?

These are some of the questions SEL asks. When we can answer them in the affirmative, we will have made the world a less troubled place. So this is important work that we are doing here this week.

A question that you may ask is why any of this is of interest to my organization, ETS. We are known for our world-class educational assessments: the TOEIC and TOEFL tests of English proficiency; the GRE graduate-school admissions test; the National Assessment of Educational Progress for the United States Dept. of Education; the PISA and PIAAC assessments for the OECD among them.

ETS has a longstanding interest in understanding and measuring noncognitive traits for both the academic and workplace arenas, and in designing tools to develop those traits. Among our initial assessments in this area was the ETS Personal Potential Index, a large-scale test that



Nettles speaks at the opening of the Salzburg Global Seminar session *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*

institutions of higher education used for evaluating resilience, teamwork, and other personal attributes considered important for postsecondary success.

More recently, we developed the ETS SuccessNavigator assessment. It is a 30-minute, nonproctored, online test to help colleges identify, and provide support for, at-risk first-year students. It does so by measuring a student’s behaviors, beliefs and skills that directly affect academic success, such as their commitment to academic success; their ability to anticipate and respond to the pressures and stresses of college life; and their access to resources to support their academic success.

For the workplace, we recently developed what we call the WorkforceAssessment for Job Fit. It is a web-based, employment-recruiting tool that measures a job applicant on six behavioral competencies associated with workplace success: flexibility and resilience; initiative and perseverance; responsibility; teamwork and citizenship; customer-service orientation; and problem solving and ingenuity. A companion measure, the WorkFORCE Program for Career Development, is an assessment and training program to support employee and job-seeker success by identifying the same six traits.

We have discontinued the Personal Potential Index, but we are intensifying our research and development of noncognitive traits and measures because of the growing evidence of their importance in school, work, and life from multiple fields and sources, including neuroscience, health,

employment, psychology, classroom management, learning theory, economics, and the prevention of youth problem behaviors. In our time together this week, we will learn about this expanding body of research, much of which is drawn from programs and interventions that have successfully integrated SEL with classroom practice and produced positive results.

In my own reading of the literature, I have found the evidence highly compelling. An organization that does excellent work in this area is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, or CASEL, which is based in Chicago. In 2011, CASEL conducted a meta-analysis of 213 studies involving more than 270,000 students. It showed an 11 percentile-point gain in academic achievement among students who participated in SEL programs compared to students who did not. Participating students also showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school.

A 2015 study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found statistically significant associations between measured social-emotional skills in kindergarten and key young-adult outcomes across multiple domains of education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health. The findings would seem to support use of an SEL test to measure whether kindergartners are at risk for deficits in noncognitive skills later in life so that they can receive early intervention.

As for the cost of SEL interventions, CASEL points to a recent study by researchers at Columbia University showing that the measurable benefits of SEL exceed its costs, in some instances dramatically.

Cost, then, should not be an impediment to broad use of SEL in schools.

Neither should politics. But that is always a wild card in public education. That is certainly the case in the United States, where public education is far less centralized than in many other countries. Very often, public education becomes a proxy for political and cultural combat between the Left and the Right.

It would seem that SEL could be

just one more field of battle. I can see conservatives viewing social and emotional interventions as politically correct coddling of children who would benefit more from some old-fashioned discipline – what we call the “spare the rod, spoil the child” approach to pedagogy. And I can see progressives viewing SEL, with its emphasis on behavior, as a way for conservatives to infect the curriculum with conservative morality.

And yet ...

And yet two Washington, D.C., public policy think tanks – the Brookings Institution on the left, and the American Enterprise Institute on the right – recently collaborated on a study on ways to improve the prospects of people born into poverty. If there is anything that provokes partisan conflict, it is poverty relief.

And yet these partisan scholars found common ground on SEL. Their recommendations include educating “the whole child to promote social-emotional and character development as well as academic skills.” Even the authors seemed surprised by their agreement. But as they write in their report, “The only way forward, we believe, is to work together.”

It must have taken *enormous* amounts of social and emotional skills for them to work together, let alone agree!

Finally, this topic is of interest to ETS in the context of our previous Salzburg Global Seminars, in particular last year’s. It was titled “Untapped Talent,” and it asked the question “Can better testing and data accelerate creativity in learning and societies?” We answered in the affirmative. Our view was that much of the data being generated in our Information Age can be captured, analyzed and put to use to improve educational and workplace outcomes through such tools as data mining and analytics.

It was an excellent and productive session. In fact, participants suggested that we broaden the discussion beyond academic, technical and vocational skills to include social and emotional skills and measures.

And so here we are. This work is not without challenges. It is true that there is a foundation of excellent, groundbreaking, cross-discipline research in support of integrating SEL with cognitive classroom work. And

as I noted a moment ago, there is even political common ground on which SEL interventions can move forward.

But social and emotional skills measurement is still in its nascent stage. And to state the obvious, it is quite unlike measuring cognitive skills. We are not measuring a student’s ability to solve a math – or “maths” – problem, dissect a frog or identify five causes of the Second World War. Measuring soft skills entails an element of subjectivity. Moreover, some of the successful programs that have been studied were customized for local conditions and are not easily replicable or scalable. Wide adoption of SEL interventions will require development of reliable, valid and scalable measures.

But I do believe that will happen, hopefully in part through our discussions here this week.

It seems like a blindingly obvious proposition: Being a good, empathic, thoughtful, even-tempered person able to work with others will make you happier, healthier, and more productive. We have an expression in the United States to indicate something that is so obvious: “Duh.”

But just because 15 scholars in Washington, D.C., can agree on an issue does not mean that the issue is settled. It may just mean that the battle is joined. It is certain that there will be resistance to the very idea that schools should teach emotional skills instead of just focusing on the basics: reading, writing and arithmetic. And as always, there is unlikely to be one approach that will work for all countries and cultures. There should not be. The approach needs to fit the place, not the other way around.

Still, we are not starting from scratch. And social and emotional learning does have something for all parties. Teachers support it, employers want it, economists value it, and researchers are excited by it.

I hope we all view the next few days as an opportunity to learn from one another and to inspire, encourage, and motivate one another to bring back to our home countries a simple message: the *whole* child matters.

This article is an edited version of Nettles’ opening address at the session *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*



Sandeep Pandey



Mary Goretti Nakabugo



Koji Miyamoto

Hot Topic: “What does ‘Social and Emotional Learning’ mean to you and at what age do you think SEL development is most important?”

Chris Hamill-Stewart & Yeji Park

“It means developing the whole person: the cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of human development. I think we have to begin the learning process at birth. It begins when parents or guardians interact with young babies. It is the continuous quality of those interactions that develop people into human beings that are tolerant, that have a good work ethic and high-quality human interactions.”

Michael T. Nettles

Senior Vice President, ETS, USA

“It means learning things like resilience and grit. It’s massive in the UK at the moment. People are trying to think about how we can make our students more resilient [toward] things when they get upset by something and that they are able to deal with it in the right way and have the support behind them. I think it should start from primary school. Those things develop at a quite young age so you need to be dealing with it earlier rather than later at university when it’s too much of a problem by that point that they haven’t had that support.”

Eleanor Busby

Journalist, Times Educational Supplement, United Kingdom

“In my view, social and emotional skills have three core areas, or important dimensions, where social and emotional skills play an important role: the capacity to achieve goals; to work well with others; and to cope with emotional challenges. The sooner this development takes place the better, although some recent evidence suggests that sensitive periods are during early adolescence, not necessarily during early childhood – because this is a time when children’s social interactions change a lot.”

Koji Miyamoto

Senior Economist, World Bank’s Education Global Practice, USA

“Social and emotional learning, to me, refers to the emotional resilience of a learner, and their ability to absorb and respond to different experiences throughout the learning process. I think it’s important throughout the developmental cycle, but especially around adolescence, when people start to become more independent. It’s important when what they encounter in their environment has to be reconciled personally, rather than in a protected space.”

David Wilsey

Director of Masters Program in Sustainable Development Practice, University of Minnesota, USA

“For a long time in my country, teaching and learning has been focused on the academic, cognitive processes. At Twaweza, we have been assessing reading, writing and numeracy competencies, but I think in order to really assess and nurture a child – a whole person – we need to go on beyond those traditional subjects. We need to nurture skills like confidence, resilience, and communication, skills people will need in their real life, social and emotional skills. I think the earlier this takes place the better, these skills should start being nurtured before school.”

Mary Goretti Nakabugo

Senior Management Team, Twaweza East Africa, Uganda

“The child should be emotionally stable and socially sensitive to other human beings around him or her. He or she should also have these skills in order to contribute as a productive citizen in society. SEL development, in fact, starts even before the child goes to school in the family itself, from the values family instill in the child. I think it should start as early as possible.”

Sandeep Pandey

Vice-President, Socialist Party, India

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[#SGSedu](https://twitter.com/SGSedu)

Use the hashtag on Instagram and Twitter and we'll share your photos with the rest of the session in the newsletter!



Ann Mroz and Michaela Horvathova

The past, present & future of SEL

Has social and emotional learning (SEL) been overlooked in the past? What place does it have on curricula at present? And what greater importance might SEL have in the future?

These were just some of the questions facing the opening panel on the first full day of the Salzburg Global session *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*. Bringing perspectives from the UK, Costa Rica, Slovakia and Korea and from across sectors including the media, public policy and research, opinions varied greatly.

While the formal categorization of SEL might be recent, skills such as grit, resilience, communication, and empathy have long been present in schools' curricula, argued one Fellow. These skills used to be developed through participation in the arts and music. However, these subjects are being squeezed out and sacrificed in place of greater emphasis on more "valued" subjects such as math, science and literary. "We're removing the 'joy of learning,'" warned one Fellow. "You can teach a child to recite a poem but that won't give them empathy."

The *social* aspect of SEL should also not be overlooked, pointed out another Fellow; the whole school environment is

a vital component in nurturing SEL, with the principal especially important in establishing a school's ethos.

The importance of the more cognitive skills-based subjects has partly been driven by the importance of their assessment and the subsequent rankings of schools and whole countries' education systems in various national and international league tables. This has led to the proposal that perhaps SEL would be taken more seriously if it were quantified, tested and measured. Whether SEL can – and indeed *should* – be tested is still very much the subject of heated debate, as was seen in Salzburg.

While the assessment of SEL would likely help raise its profile and perceived value, it could also lead to a narrowing of skills or a universal understanding and expectation of students' "soft skills" regardless of cultural or country context.

It must also be recognized that assessment is not the only motivation for teachers (or students). As one Fellow remarked, the ultimate goal is not to quantify and measure SEL but to nurture these skills. What other alternative incentives should be considered and adopted? "Do we teach it for the sake of teaching or teach because it can be measured?"



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Graham Robb – “You’re giving a language to children to manage their conflicts or turmoil”

Former head teacher discusses an alternative to traditional punishment

Chris Hamill-Stewart

In the UK, racism and extremism are on the rise. Hate crimes have increased 58% in 2016 compared to 2015. This trend is mirrored in other countries such as the US, where there is also a spike in hate crimes. Applying the traditional justice system to crimes of this nature is difficult to execute, and unlikely to yield significant results.

Graham Robb, Chair of Trustees at The Campus School, believes a new approach to administering justice and discipline is the answer. While attending the Salzburg Global session *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills* he shared his thoughts on how to better use Social and Emotional (SEL) skills in this area.

Robb advocates for “Restorative Justice,” (RJ) a process in which someone who does harm to another person, rather than being punished or treated as a criminal, is invited to take part in a conference involving them, the victim and other important figures, including parents and teachers. The conference follows a clear script with all participants fully briefed in advance; consideration is given to the time-frame after the incident in which the conference should take place, and even the order of participants’ arrivals is choreographed to minimize the possibility of further conflict. It is an opportunity for those involved to discuss their feelings, come to terms with the incident, and discuss how best to avoid it in the future. The process fosters empathy, and is designed to help people, particularly adolescents, understand other people’s perspectives of the incident and how it made them feel.

Robb, who has implemented the system in the high schools at which he served as head teacher, has seen “very high levels of satisfaction from the victims and perpetrators of incidents – they say it’s a fair process.” He continues, “Importantly, it’s proven to lead to a reduction in future behavior that causes harm.” Genuine feelings of remorse and freely offered apologies

are common – an often-absent outcome of traditional disciplinary measures involving children and teenagers.

RJ promotes and amplifies the perpetrators’ SEL skills development. When used in schools, “the child realizes the impact they have on the people around them – that’s empathy straight away,” says Robb. It helps to give people, especially children and teenagers, a voice in ways they didn’t have before. As Robb explains: “You learn to name emotions; you’re giving a language to children to think about constructive ways to manage their conflicts or turmoil.” The SEL aspect of RJ is undeniable, and critical to its effectiveness: “It’s about communication skills, managing conflicts, managing emotions, empathy and problem solving.”

Robb believes RJ would be especially effective in countering the trend of hate crime – a crime that evidences a distinct lack of SEL skills. However, he acknowledges some challenges in the wider implementation of the process; the media especially presents an obstacle.

“They’re likely to attack [RJ], saying people get away with crimes with just a ‘slap on the wrist’ or an apology,” explains Robb. This creates political pressure, and politicians are forced to respond to it. “This isn’t what RJ is about.” RJ is not about retribution but rather preventing similar behavior and incidents from happening again, and promoting understanding. Unfortunately, viewing RJ as “soft” remains an obstacle for its wider implementation.

Despite difficulties in implementation, the advantages are clear: it is an alternative to the “adversarial system” of the courts, one that reduces re-offending, can be evaluated, and is seen favorably by victims and perpetrators alike. In contemporary times, when the world seems to be in great need of empathy and other SEL skills, the value of Restorative Justice is evident.

In addition to improving the SEL skills of the individuals involved in



Robb delivers his workshop at the session *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*

the process, RJ can also provide wider societal benefits, especially when it is pursued instead of escalating a matter to the police and courts. Keeping potential young offenders out of the judicial system and improving their behavior helps to reduce future costs in court proceedings and incarceration.

Robb presented RJ as a case study at the session in Salzburg. Following his interactive workshop, which involved Fellows “hot-seating” him on his experiences of implementing this process in schools, Robb in turn appealed to Fellows to give him curricular advice and guidance for the new school – The Campus in north London, UK – that he is helping to establish. The school will exclusively serve students who have been removed from the conventional education system for behavioral reasons and aims to provide students with a “holistic” and supportive learning environment where “Your past can be history, not a career plan.”

As session co-organizer Catherine Millett of ETS remarked: “This is exactly what a Salzburg Global Seminar program is all about.” Exchanging knowledge and best practice the world over.



What evidence do we have and what do we need to promote SEL?

The day's second panel considered "How do we 'make the case' for social and emotional learning (SEL)?"

Positive attitudes and behaviors towards self, school and society are developed through SEL. Research has shown that students who took part in controlled SEL programs saw improved classroom behavior, had better self-esteem and management of their stress, and fewer instances of depression. Evidence increasingly shows the importance of social and emotional learning and its impact on other, cognitive skills – or as a discussant on the second panel put it: "If we invest in the heart, that will help the head."

Researchers also expect that future employers will put greater emphasis on "human" skills such as communication, collaboration and creativity as we enter the "Fourth Industrial Revolution," making SEL vital for success in the workplace of tomorrow as well as the classroom of today.

Yet ambivalence towards SEL remains with some parents, educators, policymakers, and students questioning how much, if any, time it should be given in the curriculum. There is also a persistent ignorance about where SEL skills are most needed and valuable. SEL is not just necessary in schools – these skills must be practiced elsewhere also, and used throughout a person's life, not just their education. How can we produce better evidence to support stronger arguments for the promotion and nurture of SEL?

Hundreds of SEL programs are currently being studied, but it is not enough to know *if* SEL programs work, but how, why and for whom as different results can be found in different contexts. Why is it that students who took part in a music-led SEL program exhibited greater empathy than those in the control drama-led SEL program? SEL programs alone do not see positive effects – they need to be well-planned, well-taught, and well-implemented.

Research has also shown that SEL programs are more effective when they are integrated in to the general curriculum and taught by classroom teachers rather than external experts. While they benefit hugely from such programs, adolescents often find it hard to engage in top-down SEL programs; educators need to engage them in both the program design and implementation.

Evidence to support SEL can be found and built upon from many sectors beyond just education: much can be learned from studies focusing on neuroscience, psychology, health and economics, such as the impact of SEL on physical as well as mental health (mindfulness reduces heart pressure) and how cost effective this can be for society-at-large.

Responsibility for building this evidence base lies not only with policymakers and researchers, but also NGOs, teachers and parents. These adults too need to have their SEL developed.

Music and PTSD

The arts can play a huge role in enhancing and nurturing SEL, none more so than music.

Neuroscience shows that music activates all four parts of the brain: the frontal lobe that controls behavior and emotions; the parietal lobe that integrates sensory and visual information; the temporal lobe that processes language and stores long-term memories; and the occipital lobe, home to the visual cortex.

It is partly for this reason that music has been used in helping war veterans with PTSD.

Working together with gold-selling and Grammy Award-winning songwriters, US veterans taking part in the "Songwriting with Soldiers" initiative draw on their experiences in war and the difficulties of returning home to produce not just music but songs with powerful lyrics.

Every time a person remembers an incident it moves from long-term memory to working memory. The process of recalling troubling memories and traumatic experiences and turning them into songs enables the PTSD-suffering soldiers to change how they remember such experiences. "Songwriting is a unique way of encoding a memory," explains neuroscientist, musician and law school dean Harry Ballan.

Music therapy has been shown to be beneficial in other areas. Research has shown some non-verbal autistic children can become verbal through musical exercises that help expand parts of the brain.

If music is to be adopted into SEL programs, it is important to recognize that creation holds more benefits than appreciation. Even just six weeks of piano lessons has greater cognitive benefits than attending weekly music concerts throughout a lifetime.





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Check out our Facebook page to read more about Tonia and why she wrote "I Have Monsters in my Tummy" in our *Faces of Leadership* photo series

Hot Topic: "Who should take the lead and be responsible for children's SEL development?"

Yeji Park

"We have to move from a position where SEL development is seen as a responsibility of the individual teacher in teaching it, to the responsibility of the whole school, in partnership with the parents of the children at the school and also the community around the school – because children are social beings, and social learning takes place in all of those contexts, not just the school context."

Graham Robb

Chair, Trustees of the Campus School, UK

"Society and state should be responsible for promoting and making it possible for SEL to be accessible in families, schools, communities, and also services – for example, in rehabilitation centers for substance users or in prisons. I think the state should take responsibility for making this accessible and available, but then, it should be done in partnership with all the stakeholders involved, especially with kids as well."

Carmel Cefai

Director, Center for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health at the University of Malta, Malta

"The development of SEL starts pretty much from the time you were born. A lot of that happens intuitively – the conditions at home drive a lot of that development. But the key is how you nurture that once you go into formal education. That's the challenge. And that's where we need a really good and informed group of people to nurture the development, so that it becomes complete."

Baldev Singh

Director of Education, Imagine Education, UK

"I don't think any one person or group is responsible. I think there are a lot of people who need to take part in it. Parents, teachers, family members, people in the community, and we also need to make sure that our policy makers and government officials are thinking about it, even though they might not have a direct influence on children."

Catherine Millett

Senior Research Scientist, Policy Evaluation and Research Center, ETS, USA

"If we take everything into account, there are a lot of partners that are connected to child development. SEL development can start with parents, educators or people in the community. We need to ask parents to understand

the meaning of child development in their social and emotional skills, and give them tools to do it in at home and outside of the school. It's also important to use a lot of professional bodies, such as NGOs, that will bring their knowledge into the school and help them achieve their goal."

Ayelet Giladi

General and Academic Manager, NCIW Research Institute for Innovation in Education, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

"It depends on the time and dimension of development. Before the children enter primary school, their family plays the main role in SEL development. However, once their formal education begins, school environments have a greater impact on it. It also depends on the aspects of development we are looking at. For example, children's home environment affects the development of emotional stability, while their school environment has a greater impact on the development of morality."

Meesook Kim

Senior Research Fellow, Korean Educational Development Institute, Republic of Korea

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Wednesday, December 7, 2016

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If you're interested in writing either an op-ed style article for our website or the session report, or a personal reflection blog post while you're here this week, please let Salzburg Global Editor, Louise Hallman know or email your submission directly to lhallman@salzburgglobal.org.

If you do intend to write for your own organization either whilst you're here or after the session, please make sure to observe the **Chatham House Rule** (information on which is in your Welcome Pack). If you're in any doubt, do not hesitate to contact Louise.

We'll be updating our website with summaries from the panels and interviews with our Fellows, all of which you can find on the session page: www.SalzburgGlobal.org/go/566

You can also join in the conversation on Twitter with the hashtag #SGSedu and see all your fellow Fellows and their organizations on Twitter via the list www.twitter.com/salzburgglobal/lists/SGS-566

We're updating both our Facebook page www.facebook.com/SalzburgGlobal and our Flickr stream www.flickr.com/SalzburgGlobal with photos from the session during this week and also after the session. (If you require non-watermarked images for your own publication, please let Louise know.)

We will also be posting photos to Instagram www.instagram.com/SalzburgGlobal, and we encourage you to do so also, using the hashtag #SGSedu.



@toniacasarin: Beautiful way to start the day! #SGSedu #running



Richard Roberts, Tatiana Filgueiras and Meesook Kim

Measuring social & emotional skills

If “what is measured is treasured” is true, then how should we measure social and emotional (SEL) skills?

The “Big Five” personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) are often used as a framework for SEL assessments, with labels changed depending on for whom the tests are being conducted, e.g. “agreeableness” can be re-framed as “cooperativeness” in a workplace test. Another panelist labeled them as “self-management, relationship with others, agreeableness, emotional resilience and openness.” These different terms for similar traits can cause confusion. “We suffer from a ‘jingle jangle’ fallacy,” remarked on panelist, however, standardization of terminology remains unlikely given the differing priorities of the different stakeholders.

Many tools for assessing SEL skills, such as personality inventories, rely on self-reporting, asking the person tested to rate themselves and their skills. However this can lead to concerns of “fakeability,” especially if the tests become more high-stakes. The higher the stakes, the more likely the test-taker will alter their answers to fit what they perceive to be the “correct” answer

desired by the test-givers.

Different assessment designs, such as “forced choice” assessments (asking the test-taker which of several traits is most or least like them) can lead to a more precise measurement and more comparable data.

Combining this self-reporting data with results from other tests, such as ratings completed by teachers and parents, can lead to even more precise measurements.

Testing children in isolation, however, can reduce the opportunity to evaluate the “social” side of SEL; combining teachers’ observations can provide further precision than ratings alone.

Data from ratings and observations can then be combined further with other datasets, enabling insights to be drawn on how students’ performance in SEL assessments correlates to their academic performance or potential for criminal behavior, for instance.

Successful, insightful and actionable measurements require buy-in from multiple stakeholders, from students and teachers to parents and policymakers. However, these different stakeholders buy-in at different speeds, and efforts to accept and adopt SEL – and the measurement thereof – needs to accommodate this.



Practical proposals

If we are to scale-up the implementation of social and emotional learning programs, what practical tools do we need?

Following inputs from the expert-led panels and table discussions on Day 3 of *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*, Fellows made the following proposals:

- Create a SEL “micro-credential” for teachers;
- Make use of online interactive experiences such as Second Life to offer more SEL opportunities in schools with fewer resources;
- Establish a global community of learning and practice dedicated to SEL;
- Develop performance tasks for primary and early years’ SEL skills development;
- Create “good parent” badges and guides for parents to help them nurture their children’s SEL development in the home/outside of school;
- Start SEL in early years education to increased the benefits in later years;
- Better communicate the value of SEL programs to policymakers, teachers, and the global community.

1. “Now we all have an equal sense of embarrassment” – Graham Robb

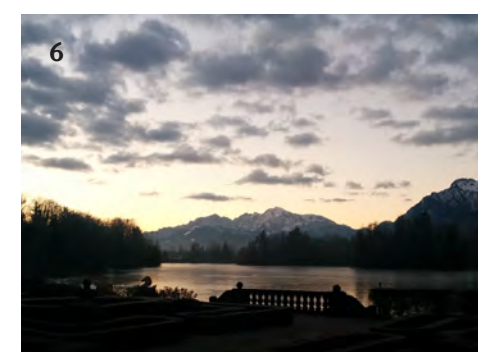
2. Koji Miyamoto

3. Have an “a-ha!” moment? Share it on a post-it note!

4. Helen Cowie, Hye Won Lee, Dominic Register and Baldev Singh

5. Julie Andrews or Richard Roberts?!

6. Coming in early to work on the newsletter has its advantages: seeing Tuesday’s sunrise!



Suicide and sinking tragedy show why social and emotional skills are so important for students

Korean students and experts explain why SEL education is gaining greater importance

Chris Hamill-Stewart

South Korea has the highest suicide rate in the OECD, and the second highest globally. The importance of image in Korea, media coverage of celebrity suicides, and poor mental health care are among the reasons cited as reasons why so many Koreans choose to take their own lives. These factors play a role, but many also cite the education system, and the competitive culture surrounding it, as another critical factor.

The theory holds weight; in Korea, the youth suicide rate is abnormally high. Suicide is the biggest killer of Korean teenagers, those in their twenties, and those in their thirties.

The Korean education system is highly competitive; there is a huge emphasis on performing well in school and going to good universities. Korean high school students average sixteen hours a day of school-related activities, in school, or in *hagwons* – after-school programs for additional education. Many researchers believe this complete devotion to education undoubtedly contributes to the high rate of suicide.

The influence education has on wellbeing has been an important issue at the Salzburg Global session *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*. Participants have looked in-depth at how education systems can be improved by better developing students' Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Salzburg Global spoke with Korean participants and staff about the effects that their education system has on students, and to look at how SEL might be able to improve this.



Heejin Park

Bina Jeon, a student in Korea and Yoojin Hong, a graduate, can attest to the need to utilize and teach more SEL skills. Both now interns with Salzburg Global Seminar, they found high school very stressful and competitive, and neither was happy. “When I had problems or felt stressed, the school didn’t provide me support – I found my support at home or with friends,” says Jeon. Hong’s experience was worse – she found that the competitive system affected her friendships, leaving her isolated from her friends if she or they achieved a higher grade. She “grew apart from her best friend from the moment she got a significantly higher grade than her.” It is not difficult to see how a culture of education like this may, in extreme cases, lead to children making rash and irreversible decisions.

Eun-su Cho, a philosophy professor in the top Korean university, Seoul National University, attended the session not to further her own academic research but to “find ways to improve her undergraduate and graduate students’ lives.” She says many of her brilliant students, with the top grades, are very quiet – they’re reserved and they don’t open up. The core of this is that they have “very little confidence.” This is not the attitude she wants her students to have.

Cho wants students to “have ideas about the future, society and their fellow citizens.” She argues that facilitating more SEL education would give students a chance to show who they are and to understand themselves better, which would build their confidence, and ultimately create better students and future leaders.

Heejin Park, a research fellow focusing on character education at the Korean Educational Development Institute, believes that things are changing in Korea, and they are starting to see the benefits of SEL skills. Park cites the 2014 MV *Sewol* tragedy as an important revelation for Koreans. The incident saw nearly 300 high school students drown when their ferry sank on a school trip and it made many in Korea realize that they may not be teaching students to think critically. Park asks if lives could



TOP: Yoojin Hong



BOTTOM: Eun-su Cho

have been saved had the students been taught to “think more autonomously.” She believes that the tragedy brought about public support for new legislation calling for more social and emotional learning, making sure that teachers are more engaged with their students and that they go further in teaching critical thinking and life skills.

Cho, Jeon and Hong all paint a dismal picture for the lives of students in the Korea, but it is worth considering the facts. In their latest PISA results, the OECD has just ranked Korea as the seventh best country in the world for both math and reading. Their education in cognitive subjects is exceptional, but the hard truth of Park’s point remains: sometimes it is not enough to just teach students to excel at math and literacy. SEL development is increasingly being recognized as important for students and into adulthood.

Korean education is opening up to the positive effects of SEL, but with such deeply ingrained ideas, culture, and norms surrounding the education system, it remains to be seen how far implementation and teaching of SEL will go.



Hot Topic: “Should SEL be measured and assessed? If so, how?”

Yeji Park

“‘What is measured is treasured.’ That’s a very fine saying. It is treasured by policymakers and key stakeholders, and you have to assume that it has to be measured. It’s possible to measure using a combination of approaches: self-report, forced choice, and situational judgment test. If you use these three and triangulate across them, then you will be able to get rid of all the problems that would occur when you only use one of these approaches.”

Richard D. Roberts

Vice President and Chief Scientist, Professional Examination Service’s Center for Innovative Assessments, Australia

“The purpose of assessment needs to be clearly defined first. If it is simply to evaluate social and emotional skills of students, I don’t think it’s very meaningful. If we try to bring out educational effects through transforming evaluation methods, it could impede the original goal of furthering SEL development as students tend to focus on achieving a better score in the new evaluation system. We could learn much more if we discuss how we can develop more efficient ways to improve social and emotional learning through the assessment process.”

Chanpil Jung

Secretary General and Founder, Future Class Network, Republic of Korea

“To find more practical, relevant and simple ways of measurement – that is part of the reason why I came to this seminar. For our project in Bangladesh, we try to encompass both qualitative and quantitative measurement. Along with qualitative research methods such as class observation, focus group discussion, and in-depth interview, we use Ages & Stages Questionnaires that have been specially adapted for the Bangladeshi context. Though the method might differ from countries, I think we still need a global standard for the assessment.”

Sakila Yesmin

Research Associate, BRAC Institute of Educational Development, Bangladesh

“I think social and emotional learning should be measured to make sure that students are not only learning traditional competencies, such as math or literacy, but that they are educated more broadly to become a productive member of society and good citizens. I’m not sure if we should measure them in the high-stake assessments like other areas, as they are different, but we should definitely monitor if some specific programs are having an impact on their mission of developing these competencies.”

Elana Arias Ortiz

Education Senior Associate, Inter-American Development Bank, Costa Rica

#FacesOfLeadership

“I was recently invited to the graduation ceremony at a school and gave remarks to students graduating at the top of the class. In my speech I said, ‘In this country, most of the people are using their education to do corruption, so please use your education to fight that corruption.’ Because you need to be educated even to figure out how the educated people are doing the corruption. Emotional and social skills are important in correcting whatever wrong is taking place in society. Only when educated people are sensitive toward their fellow human beings, and consider their responsibilities toward society almost as important as their commitment to their family and themselves, can real change take place. The education should be such that it brings the different levels of self, family, society and nature into harmony with each other. That is the kind of education we need.”

Sandeep Pandey

Vice-President, Socialist Party, India

Sandeep Pandey, vice-president of the Socialist Party of India, explains why social and emotional skills are important, especially in the Indian context.

With many interests in education, Pandey has been experimenting “non-competitive” method of evaluation that mainly focuses on each student’s learning process.

Read more profiles in our series of #FacesOfLeadership online:

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Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Join in online!

It's still not too late if you'd like to contribute an op-ed style article for the session report, or a personal reflection blog post for our website. Email your questions or submission directly to Salzburg Global Editor, Louise Hallman lhallman@salzburgglobal.org.

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@toniacasarin: Good morning
@SalzburgGlobal! #SGSedu



John Lotherington's Trump impression raises a laugh from Tonia Carasin (and most of the audience)

“Make schools great again!”

To promote social and emotional learning in schools, it is vital to secure the support of a wide variety of stakeholders from parents to policymakers – but how?

On the fourth day of *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*, in an effort to test their arguments and rhetorical skills, participants took part in a mock debate and prepared a mock memo to a so-far-unconvinced Minister of Education.

Those working to promote social and emotional learning (SEL) often face arguments against implementing SEL programs. Such arguments include:

“We’ve lost discipline and order! Children need to know their place... Life is tough, not ‘fun’ or ‘soft.’ Students need to be ready for that and have hard skills – not soft.”

“Social and emotional learning programs are an invasion into our private lives. The moral education of our children is the responsibility and choice of parents, as well as churches and communities – not schools. Entrusting our children’s SEL development to schools makes them too powerful, and minimizes role of wider community.”

“Data collection of personality tests leads to profiling! And these tests can be faked or manipulated.”

“Social and emotional learning programs are promoting a liberal, globalized agenda, and trying to universalize morals and values.”

“Schools are for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic; SEL programs take valuable time away from this.”

Knowing what reasoning can counter these arguments – and which messages resonate with different audiences – would help significantly advance SEL in schools, homes and the wider community [see back page for more].

When dealing with politicians, key points to keep in mind are that the Minister of Education may not have much of a background in education (beyond their own personal experience many years ago) and politicians can often be short-sighted and more focused on their re-election than long-term change. Developing programs that can be easily explained and communicated to a wider public and offer some immediate evidence of improvement – while appealing to their ego and legacy! – might persuade skeptical ministers.



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Ayelet Giladi: SEL is important for everyone – from children and parents to soldiers and refugees

Israeli early childhood expert reflects on her own SEL development and her work in the field

Chris Hamill-Stewart

Much of the discussions at the session *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills* has centered on the importance of the education system in delivering social and emotional learning, but for Ayelet Giladi, manager of Early Childhood programs at the Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, it is just as important to engage families.

Many participants in the session have diverse and dynamic backgrounds, but few can boast a story like three-time Salzburg Global Fellow Giladi's. From joining the Israeli Army as a commander at eighteen, becoming a Hebrew teacher for soldiers who struggle with language, to now, where she uses Social and Emotional (SEL) skills to combat child abuse and to help families across the social, religious and cultural boundaries in Israel and beyond, Giladi has not had a conventional career path.

Her time in the army was formative; Giladi commanded a unit of soldiers with little writing or reading ability, and she taught them Hebrew. She says she found herself “using a lot of social and emotional skills that I didn't know I had in the army.” Soldiers often did not want to be there, and they did not want to take part in lessons. Sometimes they threw chairs at her.

“It was their way of expressing themselves, but being an 18-year-old girl, trying to control 20-year-old, big and masculine men. It took a lot of skills,” Giladi recalls.

She believes experiences like this were important in her own personal development. They opened her eyes to how much influence she could have in other people's lives by using SEL skills.

Giladi's experience in the army, akin to a trial by fire in terms of teaching and using SEL, meant she transitioned well into her work using these same skills to work with parents of young children in Israel. She works with families “at risk” – those with children who may not have adequate early life upbringing – to give parents the tools to help their children, and give them



Ayelet Giladi

the early-life SEL skills they need to reach the first grade.

Giladi works with a diverse group of families – Arabs, Jews, Druze and Bedouins, and many religious or Orthodox families. Helping such diverse groups bring challenges. For example, “Orthodox families could have ten or twelve children, which means they might not all get the attention they need,” and she works with some mothers from the Muslim community who were married very young.

“Mothers aged 14-16 don't know themselves so well, let alone how to be a mother,” explains Giladi.

One way of helping is to guide “mothers and fathers.” by teaching them how important it is to “speak to babies as soon as they can – to play with them, take them out, be with them in the house, rather than just in front of the TV.” This fosters SEL development and it helps prepare the children for relationships with other people in their future.

While her work is primarily focused in Hebrew-speaking Israel, Giladi

emphasizes how important it is that her programs are taught in Arabic. With so many Arabic-speaking refugees currently seeking safety in countries across Europe, she believes that the work she does is a gateway to helping them and their host countries.

“When you give refugees, who are staying in an unknown country, tools in their own language, you can connect them with the country... If you help them like this, they will appreciate what the country is doing for them.” It approach will help the children, and make the families feel welcome, and want to contribute even more to their new communities and countries.

Giladi's inspirational experiences taught her that “empathy is very important in the teaching of SEL skills, and it's an important SEL trait to have.” Having empathy for the most vulnerable people – refugees, young mothers and poor families who lack the privilege of a good education – and coming to their aid “helps the individual, helps the families, and it helps the communities.”

Hot Topic: “What would be the most effective argument we could use to convince Minister of Education to promote SEL?”

Yeji Park

“What governments like is evidence. You need to have evidence showing that social and emotional skills in children can have an impact on school achievement and also building a more just society. But we need to show them how as well. We need to provide them with compelling examples of how we can do it, from which they can be inspired, and can try to integrate into their own system.”

Aline Villette

Senior Initiatives Manager, LEGO Foundation, France

“The main way to convince a minister is to think about what parents and teachers really care about. It is obviously the academic success of children, but it is also about their wellbeing. Many examples of bullying, cyberbullying or, in extreme cases, suicide, have been shown the lack of wellbeing among students these days. Sharing these indicators would help to show them why SEL is an important topic.”

Artur Taevere

Founder and CEO, Beyond, Estonia

“I don’t think there is a single answer to the question, as it really depends on the context. The arguments I would use in a high-income country would be very different from the ones I would use in a low-income country or for education in emergencies. So it depends on the context, on the education system and place – whether you go for the economic argument, whether you go for the argument that is about foundational skill for enabling cognitive learning or a holistic child development.”

Gerhard Pulfer

Grant Manager, Porticus, Austria

“First of all, SEL helps, besides the individual, to build empathy between people and cultures, which will lead to social cohesion and interculturalism. Secondly, it will be very cost-effective on the budget, because less money will be spent on remediation and we will spend very little money on prevention. Finally, we need quality education that is more relevant to today’s society. These could be three main arguments why we need to promote social and emotional learning.”

Carmel Cefai

Director, Centre for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health at the University of Malta, Malta

“When we talk to policy makers about SEL, there are three important aspects to the argument. First, SEL correlates strongly with employability skills. A range of studies shows the importance employers attach to this kind of skillset alongside traditional subject knowledge. The second argument relates to a country’s capacity to engage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Research shows that the population needs SEL skills to better deal with the challenges that SDGs are meant to mitigate. The final argument relates to education attainment. The impact SEL can have on student wellbeing and confidence correlates directly with it.”

Dominic Regester

Senior Schools Adviser, British Council, UK

Have an opinion on any of our hot topics this week?

Email Salzburg Global Seminar Editor
Louise Hallman

(lhallman@salzburgglobal.org)

with either a short 50-100 word response or a 500-750 word article and we will consider it for publication in the report to be published in early 2017!



#FacesOfLeadership

“Participating in the Salzburg Global Seminar has changed my life in numerous ways. I first came here for a session about the neuroscience of art in 2015. There I met several people who work to use music as a therapeutic intervention for trauma. Not only was I able to begin remarkable collaborations with neuroscientists I met there, but also I was able to develop friendships that have become central to my life. The session and its aftermath helped me to see that I could, in a small way, make a contribution to use neuroscience to help people...”

This session is another opportunity to see what I can learn from others, and what kind of friendships and collaborations can emerge. I agree with what Clare spoke about on our first day: that we are in an interdisciplinary and deeply human place. We are encouraged at Salzburg to approach life not as a series of discrete problems to be solved, but rather as an opportunity to help people, using whatever disciplines can help – and that is both interdisciplinary and deeply human.”

Harry Ballan

Dean and Professor of Law, Touro Law Center, USA

Harry Ballan shares how coming to Salzburg has been a turning point in his life. With expertise in law, neuroscience, and music, he is passionate about interdisciplinary cooperation.

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