

Social and Emotional Learning: A Global Synthesis

Teaching the Teachers

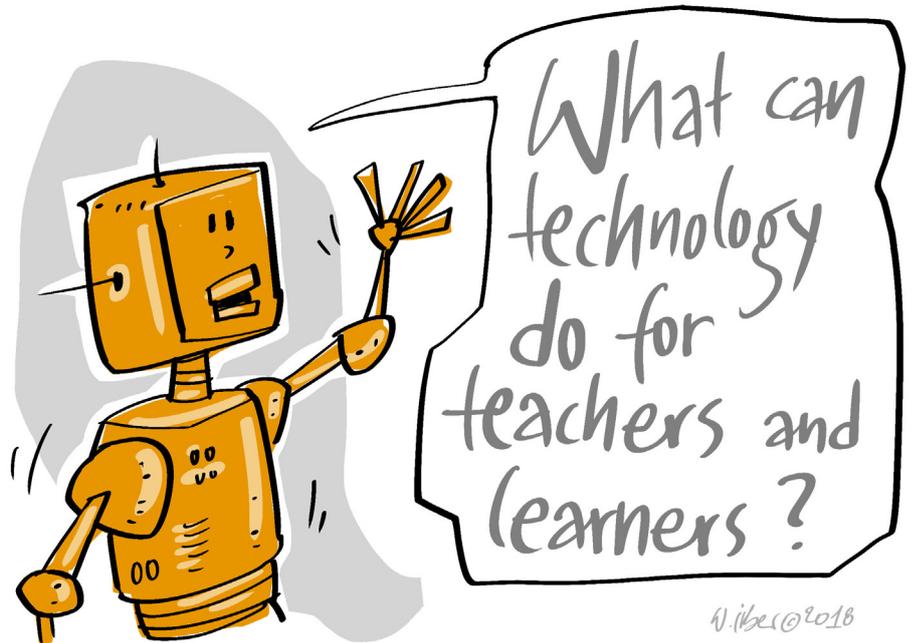
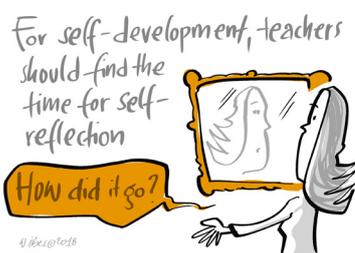
Anna Rawe

We don't expect math teachers to teach without math training, so why do we with SEL?

General consensus in Salzburg is that SEL should be introduced into the curriculum, but this cannot be done well without first looking at the teachers who actually have to deliver SEL.

Education practitioners should not be asking students to do what they won't do themselves, remarked one panelist, and for teachers to process shared emotions with their students, especially in circumstances or communities that experience trauma, they too need guidance and support. Vulnerability should thus be viewed as a strength, and most of all we need to give teachers space to reflect on their practice and process difficult questions. Examples of how to do this included self-reflective journaling, monthly teacher support meetings, and pair reflections on stories of contentious histories, such as apartheid in South Africa.

The panel also discussed the need to change teaching methods in light of Generation Z learners who can learn online the same things that they would in the classroom. Here the importance of teaching methods rather than specific content becomes apparent, as there is a need to guide students' paces of learning, and to teach them how to learn.



Tech-Enhanced SEL Education

As technology has become ubiquitous in our lives, concerns have been raised about its negative impact. Despite this, tech can still be a positive enhancement for SEL development.

Across all areas, technology can help work across distances and at scales not otherwise possible. When considering how technology can be used to enhance learning of any kind, but especially SEL, the initial question should not simply be "what can tech do?" but rather "what do teachers and learners need?" Fellows at *Social and Emotional Learning: A Global Synthesis* were warned that simply "bringing in innovative tools doesn't lead to innovative practice."

Video conferencing, for example, is already being used to good effect in classrooms for purposes such as language learning. In social and emotional learning, key skills to be developed are communication, collaboration, cultural and understanding. Video conferencing can help here too. Microsoft's annual "Skype-athon" connects students in classrooms across the world to share their learning experiences and daily lives with each other. Further enhanced by artificial intelligence (AI)-driven live translation tools, these exchanges can transcend

linguistic barriers.

In diverse school communities, especially those serving large numbers of refugee and migrant children, live translation tools – either using text or audio – can greatly improve parental engagement, such as at parent-teacher conferences, reducing the costly need for human interpreters.

Gamification is also being used to great effect in other areas of education, and now too in SEL. Edutech company Immersive Minds are using the popular online game Minecraft to address students' understanding of the refugee crisis. By playing through different scenarios and collaborating with students around the world (again aided by live translation tools), students explore what it is like to be forced to leave home, to have power and have it taken away from them, to need to trust people, and ultimately to have empathy.

Even in schools without access to the latest devices and easy connectivity, tech can help open up philosophical debates that are important for students to develop their SEL skills. "Is it OK to kill people in World of Warcraft?" "Can I be rude to Siri/Alexa?" and "Who's responsible for self-driving cars?" can all prompt interesting ethical debates.



What Is the Place of SEL in Our Violent World?

Social and Emotional Learning can help create a safe space that wins at-risk youths away from violent crime

Kwasi Asiedu

In the past 12 months, there have been more than 62,000 murders in Brazil, a record high even for a country that has experienced violent crime for decades. A significant proportion of perpetrators and victims of this violence are young men and women from disadvantaged backgrounds.

An increasingly militarized police force has done little to help reduce the problem. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) could be another effective strategy to win at-risk youths away from drug gangs and hence reduce violent crime, says Tonia Casarin.

Casarin is the founder and chief executive officer of Fireworks Education, a company that promotes SEL in Brazil. She is one of over 60 participants of Salzburg Global Seminar program, *Social and Emotional Learning: A Global Synthesis* (December 2 to 7, 2018).

“We do curriculum development and teacher training in social and emotional learning and also we do a lot of content development in social and emotional learning for kids, teenagers, adults, parents and teachers,” she says.

Of the importance of SEL, Casarin says: “there is a lot of research [that shows] that if we develop social and emotional skills in kids, they will have great results in the long term for themselves as individuals and also they will make better decisions not only for themselves but also for the society. It is

not only for professional success but also health and happiness.

“Even adults don’t know how to identify their emotions and understand them, so as part of the emotional intelligence framework...I said [to myself], ‘why not start early?’...[because] if we do early interventions, we, of course, will have better results in the long term.”

To this end, Casarin is the author of two best-selling children’s books in Brazil: *I Have Monsters in My Tummy* and *I Have More Monsters in My Tummy*, which she says helps children to “learn the vocabulary of emotion so that they can express and self-regulate themselves [so that they can gain] this main ability of emotional intelligence.”

Casarin has also been working on a project in Sobral, a city in the north-east of Brazil, which is helping to develop the SEL skills of teachers as one of the ways to help reduce the number of youths falling into organized crime.

She says “We talked a lot about how to build a safe space in the classroom for the kids and after the classroom, the [whole] school. That is because maybe the classroom is the only safe space some of those kids have so [the teachers have] started to realize the importance of building that to leverage the sense of belonging [in] these kids so that they are not on the streets anymore.”

If the students can be kept comfortably in the safety of school instead of wandering the streets without clear purpose, Casarin says they are at a much

lower risk of getting into contact with gang recruiters. She adds: “And when they are not [in school], they can also reflect on their role in society. So they can decide what is better for me as an individual: ‘Is it a good thing to go out with the drug dealers?’ [This helps to] also build autonomy and self-care.”

Brazil is not the only country where SEL skills are being leveraged to help in violence reduction; in Sri Lanka too, it is being used to support conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

“After having a conflict that lasted for three decades, there is a strong need for Social and Emotional Learning in our younger generation to ensure that we don’t get into such a circumstance in the future,” says Manjula Dissanayake, founding executive director of Educate Lanka, a non-profit social enterprise based in the US but operating in Sri Lanka. Dissanayake is also one of the participants of this session. Aside from providing cash transfers which ensures that students can cover outstanding school bills, Educate Lanka is in the business of mentoring and guidance aimed at instilling positive values in Sri Lanka’s future leaders.

The latter is especially significant because while the dark clouds of war no longer hang on the island nation, it still experiences sporadic cases of ethnic and religious violence. This demands that “social and emotional skills are integrated into the educational system,” says Dissanayake, “so that we have a generation of young people coming into the society as leaders and citizens who would have all those values and traits of a global citizen, who embrace diversity and have respect for the differences in their society.”



Measuring and Assessing SEL

If what's measured is treasured, then measuring SEL should help to better establish its place in schools' curricula. But how can and should SEL be assessed and measured?

As one panelist in Salzburg advised, before assessing social and emotional skills, we need to ask three questions:

1. What do we need to know?
2. Why do we need to know this?
3. What are we want to do with the data?

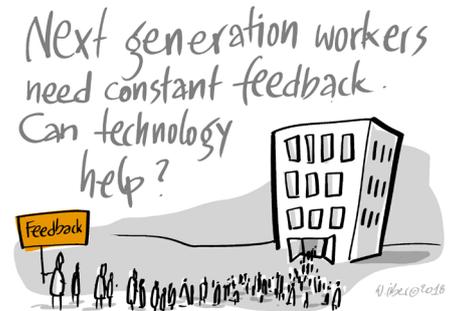
If we have a clear answers about need and purpose for that data, then we have a good reason to assess SEL skills. This assessment might either be to assess the student's individual progress in developing specific skills or to help assess the efficacy of an SEL program.

In 2015 and 2016, Salzburg Global Seminar held two programs on this topic: *Untapped Talent: Can better testing and data accelerate creativity in learning and societies?* and *Getting Smart: Measuring and Evaluating Social and Emotional Skills*, respectively. Both programs produced statements and reports

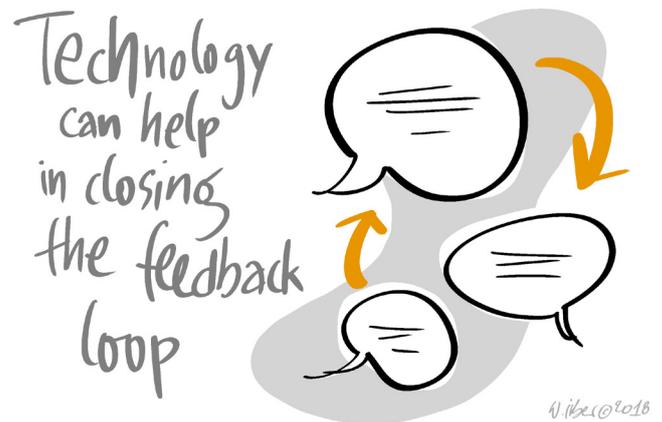
(available at www.salzburgglobal.org/go/education), with the latter offering the following key principals for SEL measurement:

- Different instruments should be developed for each age group;
- Measurement should rely on instruments that enhance feedback and reflection;
- SEL assessment should move from fixed measurement to multiple evaluations over time, or continuous evaluation;
- SEL assessment should combine multiple perspectives, from different actors: self-assessment, peer assessment, two teachers (at least) and parents, to gain greater precision; and
- Measurement systems should be based on low-stakes assessment at the school levels but use high-stakes assessments at the central level.

Whatever method of assessment is used, assessors need to be mindful of the pitfalls of assessment and avoid instilling the temptation to "teach to the test".



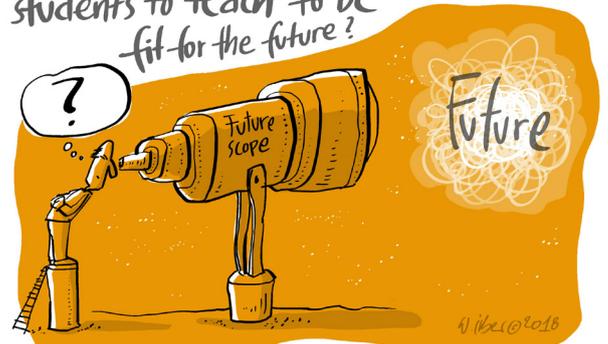
Tech-Enhanced SEL Education (in pictures)

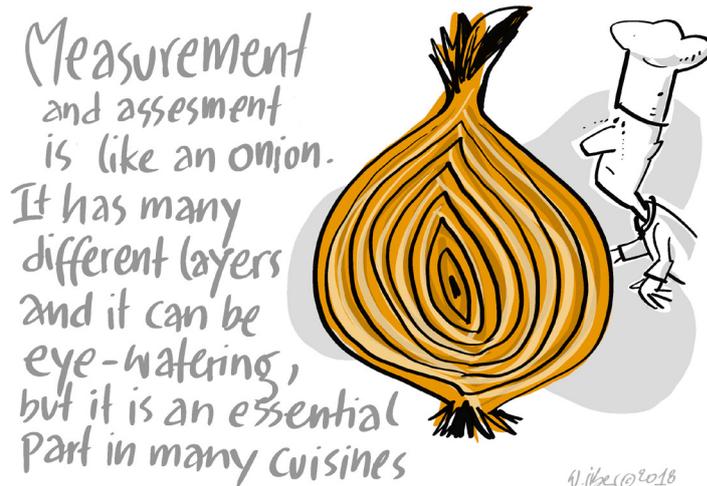


Instead of just increasing screen time, tech should foster connections otherwise not possible



What are the skills we need the students to teach to be fit for the future?





HOT TOPIC: Should SEL Be Measured? If So, How?

Anna Rawe

“There’s some very general social and emotional factors that can be assessed at pretty much any age, so starting when students enter all the way through school, what changes is how you carry out that assessment. The most valid assessments we have now are one where, in the early years, it has to be completed by a teacher [because] the student isn’t capable of self-assessing. There’s a lack of awareness and lack of reading skills that prevents that from happening... [In] third or fourth grade you can begin to ask a student to self-assess and you can couple that with teacher assessments, or not. For the most part we do these kinds of assessments with ratings scales, look[ing] at scales [of] teachers’ ratings or students’ self-ratings. But, more and more there is beginning to be developed performance assessment tasks, so we are looking forward to the day when we have a whole suite of task designed to measure social and emotional skills that depend on students performing some kind of task.”

Patrick Kyllonen

*Distinguished presidential appointee,
Educational Testing Service (ETS), USA*

“I think that we need to set objectives [that are] very clear, for what group of social and emotional skills we need to assess in a particular context. For example, what a country needs could be different for other countries... The age is so important because, for example, little children cannot respond or answer [using] scales; we have to look for adequate ways to assess. I think that all

of these questions are still remaining unanswered... We need much more research about this.”

Humberto Perez Leon Ibanez

*Head, Learning Quality Measurement Office,
Ministry of Education, Peru*

“We are right in the middle of that question right now in India. We’ve got partners to develop instruments, we’re asking questions... Even if you assess how are you going to integrate that? Should children’s social and emotional skills see a year-on-year increase? The sector only understands linear growth... [For those over 7 or 8 years old] measurement for me at this point of time is really important to set a sense of urgency. There’s literature saying its important, but we don’t know how bad it is in India... Measurement is critical to be able to understand what are we even dealing with, [but] what is the baseline?”

Sukhmani Sethi

Program Manager, Porticus, India

“I think there’s a difference between assessing and monitoring, or reporting. In terms of assessment test-type of activities, I would say no. We have in Scotland... SHANARRI [Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included] indicators... We’ve got a curriculum [where] children have certain capacities that include being effective contributors, responsible citizens, successful learners, and so on. Then we have national policy, which is ‘Getting it right for every child’, which applies to schools but it’s a multi-agency approach – it’s not just down to teachers to make sure that children are OK... Schools use

the SHANARRI indicators and children look at children and look at how they’re doing using a range of these indicators and then we build up a picture of how the child is doing... It’s a rounded picture rather than test assessment.”

Linda Brownlow – *Head, School of Education, University of Strathclyde, Scotland, UK*

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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 email your submission to Salzburg Global’s Strategic Communications Manager, Louise Hallman: lhallman@salzburgglobal.org.

Whether writing articles or Tweeting, please make sure to observe the **Chatham House Rule** (information on which is in your Welcome Pack).

We’ve been writing summaries from this week’s panels and interviews with some of our Fellows for our website, all of which you can find on the session page: [SalzburgGlobal.org/go/603](https://salzburgglobal.org/go/603) and you are welcome to republish any of this content on your own websites.

At the end of the session, you will find photos and Wolfgang’s illustrations available to download on [flickr.com/SalzburgGlobal](https://www.flickr.com/photos/salzburgglobal/). Hi-res, unwatermarked images can be provided. Please email Louise.