

**LEARNING, SHARING, GROWING – SEL TOGETHER!**

by

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this project is to provide a manual for kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers in Prince George schools. This manual is to assist classroom teachers in leading their students and their parents on a purposeful explicit journey into and through the importance of social emotional learning (SEL). This project begins with background information regarding social emotional learning, why SEL needs to be taught in our classrooms, the importance of parent involvement in schools and their understanding of SEL, and teachers understanding the significance of SEL being taught in schools. A literature review explores what SEL is, the importance of SEL in the school setting, the impact of parent involvement with SEL in the school setting, and the implication of teachers knowing and explicitly teaching SEL to their students. An outline of how the project is structured is offered. Finally, an educator's manual for instruction on SEL to students in kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms in Prince George schools will be created. The manual outlines the procedures for implementing parent afternoons including suggested activities and prerequisite teaching of the students.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In the British Columbia school system, inclusion of children with complex learning needs (CLN) within the regular classroom is promoted whenever possible. Thus, the individual requirements of a child with CLN must be addressed within the context of the regular classroom by the generalist teacher. In my experience, children with CLN are often not diagnosed with a medical condition or designated with a category for educational funding.

For the purpose of this project, a complex learner is defined as a learner having a broad spectrum of intellectual and developmental deficits. These deficits in individuals will range from normal to obviously abnormal and distinctive (Astley, 2004). Astley (2004) and Clarren (2004), noted deficiencies in the central nervous system that create dysfunctional behaviours and issues with daily functioning. There are neurological impairments that include intellectual and learning disabilities (verbal and nonverbal), deficient executive functioning including but not limited to memory, reasoning, task flexibility and problem solving, discrepancy in speech/language functioning, increased rates of emotional disorders, behavioural regulation issues such as irritability, hyperactivity, perseveration and an inability to focus, and poor fine motor co-ordination (Astley, 2004; Clarren, 2004).

In my practice as a classroom teacher in an inner-city school in Prince George, BC and as the teacher facilitator for all five of the inner-city schools in Prince George, I have seen an increasing number of children entering the system or already in the system with CLN. In my new position as a teacher consultant with the Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, (POPFASD), I continue to hear that the ratio of



complex learners to typical learners is increasing. Elksnin and Elksnin (2003) also noted that there are an increasing number of children at-risk for school failure in regular education classrooms.

The number one complaint I receive from classroom teachers is their learners are not equipped with the social emotional skills required for academic learning and that managing and responding to these behaviours competes with time that should be devoted to academic activities. This sentiment is supported in the research by Menzies and Lane (2011). Bouffard's (2014) research demonstrated that when students can cope with their frustration and anger, listen to adults and peers, and get along with classmates, teachers can teach, and students can learn.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of my project is to create a manual for kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers in Prince George schools that could assist classroom teachers in leading their students and their parents, together, on a purposeful and explicit journey into and through the importance of social emotional learning (SEL). Denham and Brown (2010) reported that children who have a firm foundation of SEL skills have stronger grades and solid achievement later in their school career. Pryor and Pryor (2009) described children whose parents are actively involved in their education as having enhanced academic achievement. The educator's manual may provide kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers in Prince George schools a place to start learning about, teaching and embracing SEL in their classrooms. The information they need to get started in SEL instruction will be in this manual. This educator's manual could further emphasize the importance of parental involvement in their child's education for nurturing success in

school (Sawyer, 2015) and provide direction to teachers for implementation of three parent afternoons on SEL. Downey (2002) and Henderson and Mapp (2002) also identified parent participation in schools as a strong indicator for school success. The manual may well confirm the importance of classroom teachers being thoughtful when choosing SEL programs for kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) reported that students who participate in SEL programs had higher academic performance than their peers especially when the SEL programs executed sequenced, active, focused and explicit (SAFE) criteria.

SEL is an umbrella term for a continuum of skills that include controlling emotions to sustaining attention and focus (Bouffard, 2014). The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2016a) supports this definition and further defines SEL as a progression through which children obtain and efficiently apply knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions. In an even more detailed examination CASEL (2016a) and Denham and Brown (2010) stated there are five core competencies that are central to SEL; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making, and relationships/social skills.

In my experience, when SEL interventions are taught on a daily basis in a regular classroom, then children with CLN in schools will show improvement in their SEL skills. Some researchers concurred that SEL improvement is noted through explicit SEL instruction (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Bernard, 2008; Bouffard, 2014). These researchers further noted that SEL instruction enhances social emotional well-being and benefits academic achievement. Coupling student SEL instruction with actively involved

parents in afternoons of SEL instruction will lead to positive outcomes in classroom behaviours and emotional security (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010).

Gewertz (2003) reported that a deliberate and inclusive approach to teaching social emotional skills can elevate grades and test scores, promote enthusiasm for learning, reduce behaviour problems, and improve cognitive functions. Denham and Brown (2010) concurred that SEL must be given consideration to increase children's success in social relations, personal well-being, and to raise academic success. This project could reinforce the need for kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers to understand that the diverse challenges of complex learners require explicit SEL instruction. SEL instruction is further encouraged by the new redesigned BC curriculum (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). A foundational piece of the new curriculum is the personal and social (PS) competency and the physical and health education (PHE) learning standards, which weave SEL into all aspects of the child's school day.

### **Significance of the Project**

SEL has been described as the movement that will help foster learning (Gewertz, 2003). Mindess, Chen, and Brenner (2008) further stated that intentional teaching in the area of SEL is a key foundation of school success for all children. School success, for this project, is defined in proximal and distal terms with the same outcome. The outcome is students and then educated citizens (BC Ministry of Education, 2016) that regulate emotion, attention, and behaviour. These educated citizens are flexible and self-motivated, make independent decisions, and are productive contributing members of the classroom and the community at large. The successful student and the educated citizen

think critically and engage in a range of prosocial behaviours (Denham & Brown, 2010; BC Ministry of Education, 2016).

In the general elementary school population, every classroom has learners with complex needs. Some research demonstrated that SEL is the key to the complex learner's school success (Bouffard, 2014; Gewertz, 2003; Mindness et al., 2008). CASEL (2016a) stated that using teacher-focused SEL programs not only augments student social emotional skills, but also trains teachers to be more emotionally supportive and responsive of their students and to practise positive discipline.

There is growing literature that supports the need for explicitly teaching SEL skills to complex learners and overtly educating parents on the importance of SEL (CASEL, 2016a; Denham & Brown, 2010; Menzies & Lane, 2011). Kalberg and Buckley (2007) supported genuine family involvement, as the teacher moves in and out of a child's life while the family is prevalent throughout the child's entire schooling. Shanker (2012) concurred that family involvement is imperative for successful SEL and positive school achievement. CASEL (2016a) further supported the school-family dyad as it ensures uniformity in the messages students obtain and the practices they experience over a variety of social settings.

The new BC Curriculum, *Building Student Success* (BC Ministry of Education, 2016) fosters social emotional learning in the classroom by including the PS competency as one of three core competencies and the learning standard of PHE for all students. According to the BC Ministry of Education (2016), the core competency, PS, along with the core competencies of communication (C) and thinking (T) are the center of the new curriculum and are to be evident in every area of learning. Physical and health education

(PHE), in conjunction with the core competencies, are supporting the development of students who are competent thinkers, deep learners and communicators, and who are personally and socially competent in all areas of their lives (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). The learning standard, PHE, to be reported on every term, has social emotional skills as a focus in three of the five Big Ideas. Although SEL is explicitly taught in the PHE, the Ministry document (2016) states the competencies are to be distinctively apparent in each subject area. The PS competency includes positive personal and cultural identity, personal awareness and responsibility, defined as social and emotional health, and social responsibility. Thus the new BC curriculum has given SEL a place of importance.

In summary, I am convinced that SEL instruction by the classroom teacher in kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms, together with parental involvement, is central for school success. In my research, I have noted there is a dearth of resources that link teaching SEL, involving parents, and the roles and skills of the classroom teacher. I have written a manual in the area of parents and children learning, sharing and growing SEL together. It is specifically designed for kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers that will outline what is SEL, the importance of SEL being taught in classrooms, the significance of parental involvement, and the prominence of the classroom teacher alongside the new BC curriculum. This manual is not be linked with a specific SEL resource and thus classroom teachers can choose the programs that meet the needs and strengths of their students, their school community, and themselves.

## **Personal Location**

Even before there was a name for it or it was talked about in staff rooms and on professional development days, before books were written on the subject and children's shows taught about it, social emotional learning was on my radar; it was part of me. I just did not have a name for it; it just was.

My work experience prior to university and during university centred on children. During my summers from Grade 8 through to Grade 12, I worked as a camp counsellor at a forestry camp for children ages eight through 14. Although I was involved in many aspects of the camp, organizing and leading the nightly campfire sing-alongs was my highlight. All children, and even reluctant adults love to sing and dance and I have been able to carry this activity through my teaching career. This is a great relationship maker; it breaks down barriers, puts everyone on the same plane and allows people to, as Raffi would say, "shake their sillies out". In Grade 12, I volunteered for a swimming program through the Child Development Center in Williams Lake. These children lived with cognitive, developmental and/or physical disabilities. While in university I volunteered at Laurel House, now The Laurel Foundation. This is a society that supports children with autism spectrum disorders and their families. In my last two years at university I worked in a staffed residential home for the Vancouver Community Living Association. The young male adults who lived there were developmentally disabled. It was through these three experiences that I learned to co-regulate. I learned that before I could do anything with my 'friends' they needed to be regulated, they needed to be purposeful and they needed to be present. I learned that building a relationship came before the learning of a new task or skill. Building a positive relationship allowed my friends to trust that

what I was asking them to participate in or to try was for their benefit and that I was there with them. In my current job, I have had the opportunity to delve deeper into the importance of relationships. Through the works of Stephen Covey, The Emotional Bank Account, Sara Algoe, Find, Remind and Bind, Dr. Allen Mendler, The 2X10 Method, and Tim Knoster, positive behaviour intervention and support and the positive-to-negative ratio, I teach BC educators that developing a positive trusting relationship is the foundation to classroom management, to implementing accommodations and to creating an environment where all students can learn and thrive.

Most of my practica at university were in behaviour rooms, in support positions, or in learning assistance. These experiences gave me a wide breadth of experiences in working with children who required more time to learn, who needed to wiggle more than their friends, and who needed to laugh before they started to work.

When I graduated from the University of British Columbia in April 1988, with a special education degree, I headed north to Fort Nelson. There I had my own Grade 2 classroom. From the moment I walked into my very first classroom until today, 28 years later, working as a teacher consultant, being able to recognize the importance of social-emotional health has been paramount to my success as a teacher. In all my work relationships, with children, colleagues, and parents, applying the five social and emotional learning core competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2016a) are evident in every aspect of my professional life. Now that I have the CASEL language, I realize that building relationships, laughing and at times crying, taking a deep breath, knowing when to stop and start conversations, and when to encourage and when to back

away are ways of modelling the SEL core competencies to children, parents and colleagues.

Through my work as the primary project facilitator, I had an opportunity to work in the classrooms of dynamic and talented teachers in the inner-city schools in Prince George. Through dramatic and free play, through visual art, dance and drama, via hands-on activities, organizing field trips and excursions that built and enhanced schema, and opening their classrooms to a wide variety of guests, I was dazzled by the skill of these inner-city school teachers at building relationships with their students, their open-minded approach to inclusion and differentiation, their ability to embrace the curriculum in creative ways and their readiness to embed culture in to all aspects of the school day. In my five years as the primary project facilitator I saw these dynamic and talented teachers continue this high level of instruction with fewer human resources, diminished physical resources and an increase in the numbers of complex children entering their classrooms. I was impressed by their willingness to learn and try new SEL strategies with their children. I saw that teachers who were aware of their emotional expression in the classroom, who were capable co-regulators, and who could consistently model positive affect, had students who were purposeful and attentive. Teachers in inner-city schools are always teaching and reinforcing SEL strategies. They know SEL is critical to the academic success of their students.

From my experience in the classroom and supporting classroom teachers, SEL is not an area that has been or is taught at post-secondary institutions. Consequently teachers scramble to piecemeal SEL lessons together, or they ignore the topic altogether.



In my classroom at my inner-city school, relationship building with my students and their parents was the focus of start-up every September. This relationship was crucial to everything I did from the first day of school until the last day of school. My own personal beliefs and attitudes have never been a barrier to encouraging parent involvement. I have always had parents in my classroom participating in a purposeful academic activity. We taught our parents about reading to self, reading to others and listening to reading. We taught our parents about the math process. We dazzled our parents with a fine arts afternoon where we displayed our visual art, danced, did Readers' Theater and sang. I know I was modelling many, if not most of the five core competencies from CASEL, but I wasn't explicitly teaching my parents. It was in January of 2013, that I heard Dr. Stuart Shanker talk about the importance of parental involvement at school in the social emotional learning of their children. It is crucial to teach children SEL strategies and language but without parents knowing and understanding along with them, these important lifelong skills remain at school. One week after listening to Dr. Shanker, my colleague Meredith and I created a three-part initiative entitled, *Together We Learn and Grow*. We would teach, model and practice SEL skills with our students. Once a term, we would have our parents in and the students would teach them all that they had learned and practiced about SEL. These were joyful and engaging afternoons. Grandparents who had not been in a school in 50 years, parents who live with addiction issues, parents that had monitoring devices on their ankles, parents who did not want to be there, were there, learning and laughing along with their child.

It was running this initiative for two years that got me percolating the idea of a manual for my kindergarten to Grade 3 colleagues. The afternoons were a lot of preparation and work, but the positives, both proximal and distal, far outweigh any negatives. *Together We Learn and Grow* were successful afternoons because the children were excited to share their SEL knowledge, their new SEL learning, and the SEL activities with their parents. Having witnessed the parental joy of learning alongside their child, parent self-efficacy, the enhanced relationships between home and school, a greater sense of community, and an increase in parental engagement, cemented the importance of involving parents in SEL skill development.

### **Project Objective**

The objective of this qualitative project was to identify factors that could produce widespread positive change in school success for children in kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms. To this end, the central research question influencing my research was “To what degree will student success improve when kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers are provided with a manual of SEL information and procedures for implementing SEL parent afternoons?”.

To accomplish this objective, I followed a two-step process. First, I conducted a review of the literature to determine the factors that influence student school success and second, I outlined this information in a forthright and concise manner in an educator’s manual culminating with three parent afternoons prepared for implementation. In creating this manual, educators will have the facts about improving student school success at their disposal and can refer to them readily when selecting and planning SEL activities. I am also hoping that by providing three planned parent afternoons,

kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers will open their classrooms to parent involvement around SEL.

### **Overview of Project**

In Chapter 1, I provided an introduction to my project topic, I discussed the purpose and significance of SEL in schools, the classroom teacher's role along with parent engagement, and I discussed my personal location regarding the foundation for this project.

In Chapter 2, I provide a literature review pertinent to my project. I begin with a discussion and definition of SEL, moving on to research detailing the impact of SEL being taught in our schools, followed by the importance of parental involvement at school. Finally, I conclude Chapter 2 with a review and discussion of the literature on the subject of teacher knowledge and skill in the area of SEL. Throughout Chapter 2, I demonstrate how the new BC curriculum supports daily SEL instruction in the kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom. The information garnered from the literature review is the basis for the manual.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology and methods used to collect and categorize pertinent information for writing the manual. Chapter 3 also outlines the main areas of the teacher manual.

The results of the qualitative content analysis and the kindergarten to Grade 3 manual, *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together*, comprise Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 contains a concise summary of the project from onset to completion, lessons I have learned along the way, how the manual will be shared with kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers, and my final reflections.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Since 1922, parent involvement in schools has been deemed important for student achievement, reduced absenteeism, and maintaining parental confidence in the school system (Garcia & Thornton, 2014). Although the history of social emotional learning (SEL) in the schools is a shorter one, some researchers argue its position is as significant in improving academic achievement (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; CASEL, 2016a; Denham & Brown, 2010; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, & Elias, 2003). In 2007, CASEL concluded a multi-year research project and hosted a forum, “Educating All Children for Social, Emotional, and Academic Excellence: From Knowledge to Action” to raise awareness about social emotional learning. At this forum CASEL (2016b) noted significant improvement in students’ academic performances, social emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, positive social behaviour, conduct problems and emotional distress when SEL skills were explicitly taught in schools. In 2015, the BC Ministry of Education (2016) introduced a redesigned curriculum embedding SEL into all aspects of the curriculum.

Prior to narrowing my research down to uncover the specific pieces of SEL and parent involvement that helped me to write my manual *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together*, I began my research by reflecting on my classroom project, *Together We Learn and Grow* and looking at SEL and parental involvement in a broad sense. In the course of my literature review I examined many scholarly articles, scholarly websites, and attended conferences and workshops. I used the information gathered to draw conclusions about what is most important, what is missing, and what is needed to enhance SEL instruction and parental involvement in kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of SEL and its importance in kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms. Next, I examine the significance of SEL being explicitly taught in schools. Then I detail the importance of parental involvement in a learner's school success. Finally, I analyze the classroom teacher's role and the skills that the teacher requires for successful implementation of SEL in the classroom. The embedded focus on SEL in the new BC curriculum is woven throughout this chapter.

### **What is Social Emotional Learning?**

Zins and Elias (2006) defined SEL as the capacity to recognize emotions, manage emotions, effectively problem solve, and establish positive relationships. They further explain that these SEL competencies are essential for all students and target a combination of behaviours, cognitions and emotions.

Denham and Brown (2010) presented a model of SEL that included three emotional competence skills: self-awareness (the ability to identify and assess personal feelings, interests, values and strengths), self-regulation (the ability to be aware of ones' feelings, monitor those feelings and modify them as needed), and social awareness (the ability to perspective take and understand the emotions of others); along with two relational competence skills: responsible decision making (the ability to analyze, identify, and solve social problems) and relationship skills (the ability to cooperate, listen, take turns, seek assistance and practice friendship skills).

The Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL, 2016) referred to social emotional development as the ability of a child, in the setting of family, community and culture, to form safe and happy adult and peer relationships;

practise, regulate, and show feelings in socially- and culturally- appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn.

CASEL (2016a) identified five interrelated SEL core competencies: self-awareness, (the ability to identify and assess personal emotions, interests, values, and strengths and limitations); self-management, (recognizing, monitoring, managing, and expressing one's emotions, thoughts and behaviours in socially and culturally appropriate ways and in a variety of situations); social awareness, (perspective taking and empathizing with others); responsible decision making, (identifying, analyzing, evaluating and solving social problems in a reflective nature); and relationship skills, (the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships through effective communication).

Zins and Elias (2006) stated emotions affect how and what we learn, caring relationships are the foundation for long term learning, SEL skills and knowledge can be taught, and SEL is a crucial competence to success in school and in life. Jones and Bouffard (2012) concurred and defined SEL as a set of skills individuals need to succeed in schooling, the workplace, relationships and citizenship.

Dockendorf (2016) defined the personal and social (PS) competency of the new BC curriculum as a set of abilities that demonstrate a students' awareness, understanding, and appreciation of their identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society. This competency encompasses the skills students require to succeed as the BC educated citizen (Ministry of Education, 2016). The PS core competency should be employed daily in school as learners are engaged in activities where they are thinking, collaborating, and communicating to solve problems, addressing issues, and making decisions (Dockendorf, 2016).

Heeding the existing research, SEL is defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2016a) as a process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (What is Social emotional learning?).

CSEFEL (2016), Denham and Brown (2010), Zins and Elias (2006) and Greenberg et al. (2003) concurred with this definition. These investigators further noted that the acquisition of these skills assists children to feel more confident and capable and to be more successful when developing and building friendships and resolving conflicts, to have persistence when challenges arise, and to demonstrate coping mechanisms to deal with anger and frustrations. Gaining these skills leads to organized behaviours that assist our learners in meeting short and long term goals (Denham & Brown, 2010). Denham and Brown (2010) argued that children who have a firm foundation of SEL skills have stronger grades and solid achievement later in their school career.

Through meta-analysis and reviews of relevant SEL research, Jones and Bouffard (2012) reported children who have strong SEL skills perform better in school, have increased positive relationships with peers and adults, and have better emotional adjustment and mental health.

### **SEL in Schools**

Greenberg et al. (2003) reviewed 72 evidence-based articles on school-based prevention and intervention to enhance students' personal and social assets and to

improve students' learning environments. The researchers concluded SEL programs are fundamental to implement during the pre-school years to positively influence academic outcomes. Moreover, after undertaking a review of 103 articles spanning 24 years (1986-2010), Denham and Brown (2010) reported that children as young as preschoolers would have enhanced school experiences in the pre-school and elementary years, if they had emotional competence; the ability to demonstrate, manage and understand emotions, regulate behaviour, demonstrate appropriate decision making skills and engage in sympathetic and empathetic behaviours (Denham & Brown, 2010).

Ashdown and Bernard (2011) completed a quantitative study on the SEL and academic achievement of 100 preparatory and Grade 1 students who attended a Catholic school in Melbourne, Australia and their four classroom teachers. Via the *You Can Do It! Early Childhood Education Program*, a social and emotional learning skills curriculum designed to be administered by classroom teachers and two questionnaires, it was concluded that social emotional skills are foundational for children's well-being and academic achievement.

In a meta-analysis of 213 school-based SEL programs that involved 270 034 kindergarten to high school students, Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) determined that a reduction in conduct problems and emotional distress was also positively impacted by SEL instruction. An increase in a sense of well-being and academic achievement were also augmented. With mounting evidence of the academic benefits of developmentally- and culturally-appropriate SEL instruction and application (CASEL, 2016a), the BC Ministry of Education (2016) has embedded SEL



into the curriculum for kindergarten to Grade 12 and has promoted its daily interface in classrooms.

Durlak et al. (2011) reported in their meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions that students who participated in SEL programs had higher academic performances than their peers, especially when the SEL programs executed the four interdependent characteristics SAFE criteria: (1) sequenced - connected and coordinated activities that are mastered sequentially; (2) active – a focus on engaging students in building SEL skills; (3) focus – ample time and attention on developing SEL skills; and (4) explicit – clear and specific SEL skills are targeted. CASEL (2016a) concurred with these characteristics for an effective SEL program. These characteristics can be found in the following evidence-based SEL programs: *Alert Program – How Does Your Engine Run?* (Shellenberger & Williams, 1996), *MindUp* (Hawn Foundation, 2011), and *Kelso's Choice* (Clark & Hipp, 2011).

Zins and Elias (2006) reviewed literature focused on explaining SEL in general terms, the background, a definition, and an implementation process. Their review validated that SEL and academic achievement are interwoven, and effective schools have coordinated and integrated instruction in both areas to capitalize on students' potential to succeed in school and throughout their lives. The literature review by Zins and Elias (2006) noted students learn SEL skills the way they learn academic skills; learn, practice, and apply by engaging in positive activities in the context of a caring, safe, well-managed classroom and reinforced in the school, home and community.

The BC Ministry of Education's (2016), *Building student success: B.C.'s new curriculum*, is a response to the demanding world students are entering whose end goal is

the BC educated citizen. The educated citizen will be a skilled and productive worker contributing to society. This contribution will be thoughtful, respectful, cooperative, responsible, and principled. The educated citizen will be a flexible thinker who is both a critical and a creative thinker. They will confidently communicate knowledge on a variety of topics and make decisions independently. BCs educated citizens will be self-motivated and physically healthy. Dockendorf (2016) agreed that the new curriculum will prepare our learners to be proficient thinkers and communicators, who will be personally and socially knowledgeable in all areas of their lives. Dockendorf (2016) promoted the new BC curriculum as enhancing student's thinking, learning and growing and will prepare them for a successful lifetime of learning in a constantly changing world.

Dockendorf (2016) highlighted the need for all students to develop social skills to engage in deep, transferable, and life-long learning, to be the BC educated citizen. This belief is embedded and evident in the new curriculum in the PS core competency, in the Big Ideas, the key concepts important in a curricular area of learning that contribute to future understanding, and the learning standards, the skills, strategies and processes that students develop over time, of physical and health education, specifically the curricular competency of mental well-being (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). The new BC curriculum through its concept-based learning and the core competencies is an active, authentic curriculum where students will engage in deeper learning, connect their learning to the real world and have better academic achievement (BC Ministry of Education, 2016).

Joseph and Strain (2003) reviewed eight SEL programs for children six years of age and under and stated that successful SEL approaches are presented on a daily basis, use a systematic, intentional, direct approach, and teach the skills in inclusion. Nelson, Westhues, and MacLeod (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 34 preschool prevention programs for disadvantaged children and families that impacted positively on SEL outcomes, substantiated the claim that SEL programs had a greater positive effect on outcomes when the programs were more intense and taught over an extended period of time. Additionally, Greenberg et al. (2003) explained social emotional skills are similar to other academic skills and the initial learning is enhanced over time with repeated teaching and practice.

Menzies and Lane (2011), focussing on positive behaviour support and the three-tiered model of prevention, argued that the kindergarten to Grade 3 school years are critical for a student's successful development of an academic base and social emotional skills. Furthermore, the authors stated, it is during these schools years when the traditional school expectations of reading, writing and mathematics and behaviour are introduced and the patterns in children are developed and set for negotiating the school environment, work habits, and social interaction. Menzies and Lane (2011) reported that an effective SEL program is delivered to all children in a classroom by their classroom teacher. The authors (2011) further claimed that the SEL programs should include formal lessons.

Accessing the primary findings and implications of three large-scale reviews of research, 317 studies that involved 324,303 participants in kindergarten to eighth grade, across two different time periods and settings (during the school day and after school)

and for two different types of student populations (those without any identified problems and those with early identified problems), Payton et al. (2008) communicated five key findings

- Positive effects of SEL interventions were noted on students' SEL skills, attitudes towards self, others and school, positive social behaviours, reduced conduct problems and emotional angst, and improved academic performance;
- SEL interventions were effective from Kindergarten to Grade 8, in urban suburban and rural areas and for racially and ethnically diverse student populations;
- The effects of SEL skills remained over time;
- SEL interventions were effective when incorporated into routine practice by school-based staff and widely implemented in schools; and,
- Universal interventions, tier one, that included the evidence based SAFE practice demonstrated the best outcome.

Meyers, Tobin, Huber, Conway, and Shelvin (2015) studied the three-tiered model in 27 rural villages in the Midwestern United States of America, servicing approximately 7 200 students. The researchers concluded when SEL instruction is delivered to all children as part of the standard curriculum, this is a tier one intervention. Menzies and Lane (2011) and BC Ministry of Education (2016) concurred with this premise. Furthermore, Meyers et al. (2015) explained teacher schedules and school priorities regarding the role of social emotional learning must shift to accommodate SEL lessons during classroom instructional time and school staff must acquire new skills in order to implement SEL curricular competencies and model SEL core competencies.

According to Zins and Elias (2006), this universal approach, tier one, is preventing behaviour problems and promoting social and emotional competence for all students. As well, smaller numbers of students who require more moderate to intensive SEL support to develop healthy behaviours, tier two and tier three interventions, can receive this support by expert school professionals, school counsellor, youth care worker, school psychologist or behaviour team consultant (Zins and Elias, 2006; Meyers et al., 2015). The three tiers are a continuum of services based on student needs (Zins and Elias, 2006). Zins and Elias (2006) stated that costs associated with providing support at the universal level, tier one, is a small cost per student.

Jones and Bouffard (2012) in the *Social Policy Report* for the Society for Research in Child Development reported well-designed and well-implemented SEL programs are embedded into the school day as a complement to the curriculum rather than a conflict. Integrating, rather than distracting from, and reinforcing the teaching of SEL skills into daily interactions of students and school staff is low cost, time efficient and sustainable. Schools need to promote SEL and the SEL approaches used in a school need to be designed to match the needs and contexts of individual schools and the communities they serve (Jones and Bouffard, 2012).

Meyers et al. (2015) explained that schools are increasingly responsible for addressing children's social and emotional needs and the connection between SEL and academic outcomes are more recognized. Thus, Dockendorf (2016) in hand with the BC Ministry of Education (2016) championed the implementation of a systemic change, which is based on the principle of prevention and early intervention to include SEL into the BC curriculum. This change will prepare students for the future, the BC educated

citizen. To this end, to be effective, SEL curricula requires support from the building administrators, a change in school culture (CASEL, 2016a), consultation and collaboration with parents (BC Ministry of Education, 2016; Meyers et al., 2015), and a change in how teachers and children interact around emotions and emotionally significant events in the classroom and school (CASEL, 2016a; Zinsser, Denham, Curby &, Shewark, 2015).

### **Parental Involvement in School**

Pryor and Pryor's (2009) study used 40 Kindergarten to Grade 12 teachers in a large urban area in the Southwest United States of America and employed the theory of reasoned action on teacher attitude and beliefs about parental involvement and what influences those attitudes and beliefs. The researchers concluded that children whose parents were actively involved in their education had greater academic achievement. Sawyer (2015), creator of the BRIDGES framework, a model to support teachers in fostering parent involvement in schools, also surmised that parental involvement in a child's education fostered school success.

In addition to increased academic achievement, El Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drzal (2010) studied the data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development of 1 364 first, third, and fifth grade children and described an improvement in classroom behaviour and emotional well-being with the involvement of parents.

The work of Egbert and Salsbury (2009), a one-year project centred on 17 school personnel including 14 kindergarten to Grade 12 classroom teachers in three diverse school districts in Washington, determined that involving parents in their children's

school experiences created valued home-school relationships and empowered parents. The authors explained that this dynamic partnership can contribute to an increased sense of community for parents and student achievement. Furthermore, Egbert and Salsbury (2009) noted when children were excited about an activity and had the opportunity to share their new learning with a parent, the event was deemed successful. Sawyer (2015) further acknowledged that increased parent involvement and augmented parent knowledge and skills optimize parent-child interactions and increased academic success.

Ule, Zivoder and duBois-Reymond (2015) conducted a study targeting parents of lower secondary school students in disadvantaged city areas in eight European countries. The authors explored parental involvement in the educational trajectories of children in Europe. Ule et al. (2015) focussed on four specific behavioural aspects: (1) parental educational aspirations and future plans for their children; (2) the role of parents in decision-making in educational transitions; (3) parental participation in the school; and (4) parental support with school work. The authors built their findings from 100 in-depth parent interviews and 2 parent focus groups with eight participants. Ule et al (2015) pointed out parents acknowledged their child's future not only depends on the work of the teacher but also on parents as co-educators. This co-teaching relationship is enhanced with communication and cooperation between the home and school and thus improved school outcomes, behavioural outcomes, and a good future. Successful academic achievement is attained when parents encourage, reinforce, and instruct children on developing academic self-efficacy along with social emotional self-efficacy (Ule et al., 2015). Ule et al. (2015) noted parents feel misunderstood by teachers and schools complained about the lack of parental involvement and participation in school affairs.

The empirical findings of this study suggest that the expectations of schools are geared to middle-class parents and thus there is a disconnect between the parents and the school. It is suggested that schools factor in different socioeconomic conditions, working schedules, migrant backgrounds, and language deficiencies to envelop the school community.

CASEL researchers, Fredericks, Weissberg, Resnik, Patrikakou and O'Brien (2005) created a simple guide on SEL for home and school. The authors defined SEL using the CASEL definition and championed parents as co-regulators for their children's emotional development as these skills are important for long-term health and happiness. Fredericks et al. (2005) communicated parents and schools working together can play a focal role in supporting children's SEL for school success and life success. When parents and schools work closely together, have common expectations about acceptable behaviour and the importance of academics, students hear the same messages at home and at school, the effects are doubly beneficial (Fredericks et al., 2005).

Zins and Elias (2006), in their literature review of SEL, stated "the most effective, sustained approaches involve students, parents, educators, and community members as partners in planning, implementing, and evaluating SEL efforts" (p. 2). They argued that this multi-stakeholder approach would be most effective in integrating SEL in the classroom.

### **Teachers and SEL**

Greenberg et al. (2003) argued that systematic, explicit SEL instruction should commence in pre-school and continue through high school. The scholarly treatise analyzing the wide range of research evidence in early childhood education from large-



scale public programs to small-scale interventions, both in public and private programs by Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, and Thornburg (2009), supported the explicit, intentional instruction to ensure children's learning. Ashdown and Bernard's (2011) research reinforced the need for educators to use explicit and direct instructional practices that are contained in formal social and emotional lessons. Ashdown and Bernard (2011) further acknowledged that teachers needed to embrace the SEL competencies and teach the SEL curriculum in a formal way.

According to the BC Ministry of Education (2016), SEL needs to be woven into the daily fabric of school life alongside the academic piece which is supported by Payton et al.'s (2008) research. These authors noted that significant outcomes in SEL skills, attitudes towards self and others, positive social behaviour, conduct problems, emotional distress and academic performance were achieved when a classroom-based SEL intervention was implemented by the classroom teacher. CASEL (2016a) highlighted engaging with students in positive ways and assisting them to sustain attention and stay calm will foster SEL together with academics. As the Superintendent of Early Years, Ministry of Education and Provincial Office of the Early Years (MCFD) Dockendorf (2016) described teachers and students as creating a community of learners where everyone belongs and where emotions are openly acknowledged as part of the learning process. When the classroom is a place of feeling, and strengths and needs are recognized, then all students will be academically successful (BC Ministry of Education, 2016; Dockendorf, 2016). Moreover, Zinnser et al. (2015) undertook a mixed-method investigation in northern Virginia where they quantitatively observed emotional supportiveness in 32 private preschools and Head Start teachers, and qualitatively had

those teachers participate in focus group discussions about emotional competence. The researchers determined teachers who are more emotionally knowledgeable may experience more success in the classroom or be able to recognize the influence they are having on their students' SEL.

Durlak et al. (2011) and Meyers et al. (2015) believed that classroom teachers need to deliver the bulk of SEL instruction to their students but other school based mental health professionals, e.g., social worker, school counsellor, and psychologist may provide additional support. In addition to delivering the SEL instruction, Ashdown and Bernard (2011) stated teachers need to emphasize children's metacognition of their emotions and behaviours. Meyers et al. (2015) described the necessity of teachers learning from each other on how to integrate SEL into the school day.

Students SEL skills are influenced by the classroom teachers' own social and emotional competence and pedagogical knowledge and skills (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Furthermore, Jones and Bouffard (2012), through meta-analysis and reviews of relevant research of SEL, explained the importance of the school and classroom culture whereby the keys are healthy relationships, instructional support and classroom management. Additionally, these authors stressed the importance of effective SEL implementation in terms of skills instruction, opportunities for skill use, and prosocial norms.

## **Conclusion**

There is a plethora of literature available about social emotional learning as information is easily found on the internet, in print resource materials, and in the research literature. The literature defines SEL and indicates the importance of intentional and explicit SEL being taught to our students, for both the proximal and distal benefits.

The review of the literature demonstrates the positive consequences of teaching SEL in schools. I could find no literature to contradict this repeated claim.

Although I was able to find literature on the importance of parental involvement in schools to enhance academic achievement and how this involvement assists with an increase in SEL skills, I could find only one guide, *Schools, Families, and Social and Emotional Learning – Ideas and Tools for Working with Parents and Families* (Fredericks et al., 2008) that integrated learners, their parents, and SEL. The manual I have created should begin to lessen that void.

The teacher's role in SEL instruction is fundamental to its successful implementation. The literature identified and answered several questions that teachers need to be cognisant of when planning for and teaching SEL: who they are as social emotional people, what their beliefs and attitudes about SEL are, how they manage their own emotional responses, how they teach the SEL skills, when they teach and reinforce SEL skills, and which SEL resources they decide on and why.

*Building Student Success: B.C.'s New Curriculum*, the redesigned curriculum, is exclusively on the internet. It is written in teacher friendly language and is presented in a practical manner. To date, in my opinion, I have only found one trustworthy person, based on her credentials, speaking on the merits of the new curriculum, Maureen Dockendorf. Although Dockendorf's information is rich and supportive and walks hand-in-hand with the new curriculum, I cannot find research to substantiate her information nor the research used that gave direction to the new BC Curriculum.

The literature indicates that to increase school success for kindergarten to Grade 3 students, educators need to embrace SEL in their classrooms on a daily basis. The path

the literature is directing educators to take is one of high-quality instruction and universal interventions, tier one, for all children in the general education classroom, taught by the classroom teacher.

I have created a manual for kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers in Prince George schools that could assist teachers in leading their students and their parents, together, on a purposeful explicit journey into and through SEL.

### Chapter 3: Research Design

When I was a classroom teacher and beginning my purposeful social emotional learning (SEL) journey with my students, there were numerous evidence-based SEL programs and manuals from which to choose. There were several that met the needs of my students and my strengths as an educator. I found SEL tips for parents, SEL toolkits for parents, and parenting with a SEL focus, but there was a lack of resources on engaging parents in the understanding and learning of the SEL skills alongside their children and from their children at school, in the classroom. The intention of this project was to create a teacher-friendly and practical guide on SEL together – children, parents and teacher.

This chapter outlines my journey to begin to fill the void of resources for purposeful SEL and parental participation. This chapter discusses the research methodology I employed; the unobtrusive approach. I provided information as to why I chose this methodology and how this form of data collection allowed me to be effective in my research. Lastly, I outlined the research method I used; qualitative content analysis (QCA), including the three-phase plan by Elo and Kyngas (2007); preparation, organization, and reporting during the research process. I detailed the strengths of QCA and why I chose this method. Throughout this chapter, the hierarchical levels (Schreier, 2012) of the coding frame evolved as themes emerged and changed through heedful content analysis of the data. These themes comprise the foundation for the SEL manual – *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together*.

## Methodology

As a beginning researcher, the rationale for using an unobtrusive approach in this research was twofold: (1) to gather my data without being directly involved in the research gathering process; and (2) to analyze my data with objectivity, reduced bias, and validity (Schreier, 2012).

The unobtrusive approach to data collection was the most suitable for this manual. I did not use interviews or questionnaires in gathering my information. I did an extensive literature review, and thus my research was not dependent on or influenced by an individual's response or behaviour (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest, 2000). In avoiding direct contact with human subjects, I could avoid their possible biases and my personal biases, which might negatively affect results (Saldaña, 2013).

In analyzing my data, the unobtrusive approach allowed me to correct errors in my documenting or misinterpretations of the research (Schreier, 2012). With ease, I was able to go back into the artifacts, and find additional information on method, materials, and measures. The advantage of using artifacts that had already been conducted allowed me to be objective; I had no invested interest. The validity of my manual is sufficient and strengthened as the categories of my coding frame became more reflective of the artifacts being analyzed (Elo and Kyngas, 2007). Using a vast number of articles allowed me to capture information on SEL, parents, schools and teachers, and thus represented the concepts in my research question (Schreier, 2012).

An example of an unobtrusive approach is recording the number and the type of library withdrawals from the district learning commons with the implementation of the new BC curriculum to demonstrate a change in borrower trends. In this example and in

my research, privacy issues of the participants and possible biases are eliminated because we are not dealing with human subjects (Creswell, 2015; Webb et al., 2000). An unobtrusive qualitative approach was appropriate to explore, describe, and capture the information on SEL, SEL in schools, SEL and parents, and SEL and teachers.

## **Method**

My research method was qualitative content analysis (QCA). Schreier (2012), Elo et al. (2014), and Elo and Kyngas (2007) defined QCA as a qualitative method used for analyzing data and interpreting the meaning. I chose this method of research because it is systematic, objective, flexible, and linear, and it condenses information by means of a coding frame (Schreier, 2012). As a new researcher, these qualities of QCA provided structure to a big unknown. For me, I now had a framework in which to work. This meant that I was going to take many articles and summarize them (code) looking for commonalities (themes) that fit into my coding frame that ultimately answered my research question. It allowed me to construct the meaning, and go beyond just description of the articles. I could decipher and interpret the meaning of the articles. These qualities of QCA also allowed me to change my coding frame when new angles appeared.

Inductive and deductive approaches were used in my research. The majority of this project was inductive. The project was research supported, data driven, through an extensive literature review. The project was also concept driven and deductive, providing practical context from my professional experiences.

I came into this project with a goal: to create a manual around SEL that included parent involvement and parents learning alongside their children, to give to kindergarten

to Grade 3 teachers. I sensed this was an important educational area, deductive approach, but I was not sure why or how. Through the linear, systematic, flexible, and data-reducing QCA, inductive approach, and building the coding frame, I created a manual for kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers in SEL and parent involvement.

To conduct my research, I followed Elo and Kyngas's (2007) three-phase plan: preparation, organization, and reporting out. These phases dovetail with Schreier's (2012) eight steps in QCA.

The first part of my project was the preparation phase: the data collection, sampling strategy, and determining the unit of analysis (Elo et al., 2014; Elo & Kyngas, 2007). This phase fits with Schreier's (2012) first four steps in the eight steps of QCA: research question, select material, build a coding frame, and divide material into units of coding.

After deciding on my question, "To what degree will student success improve when kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers are provided with a manual of SEL information and procedures for implementing SEL parent afternoons?", I began my data collection (Elo & Kyngas, 2005), select my material (Schreier, 2012). During the preparation phase and the organization phase, I kept my research question visibly available so that I could continue to refer to it and thus stay focused.

I gathered scholarly articles on SEL and parent involvement in their children's education via the University of Northern British Columbia Library website, as well as other written artifacts from the internet site Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). My first cycle of coding was reading my material,



highlighting important points, and writing descriptive codes into the margins of the printed document using my lens of SEL and parents (Saldaña, 2013).

The third step of QCA is building a coding frame which is the heart of this method (Schreier, 2012). The coding frame was a way of structuring my material and focussing my project so that reducing and summarizing the gathered information was manageable (see Figure 1).

My second cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2013) aligned with Schreier's (2012) fourth step and Elo and Kyngas's (2005) determining the unit of analysis. At this stage, I divided my material into units of coding by rereading and creating an annotated-like bibliography, using both In Vivo coding and descriptive coding utilizing the categories from my coding frame.

The annotated-like bibliography allowed me to efficiently and effectively organize the categories of my coding frame. I used a separate word document that identified the category, the name of the artifact, and finally the In Vivo or descriptive code. As a novice researcher, In Vivo coding was ideal due to its simple practice of assigning the actual language found in the artifact being read and recorded (Saldana, 2013). According to Saldana (2013), descriptive coding was also idyllic for the beginning researcher as it summarizes the primary topic of the excerpt in a word or a short phrase.

Through the readings, as I coded, I asked myself several questions: (1) what do I see going on?; (2) what have I learned?; (3) is it important to include?; (4) was I surprised, or intrigued, or bothered? These questions allowed me to keep an open mind if new categories revealed themselves in the coding process.

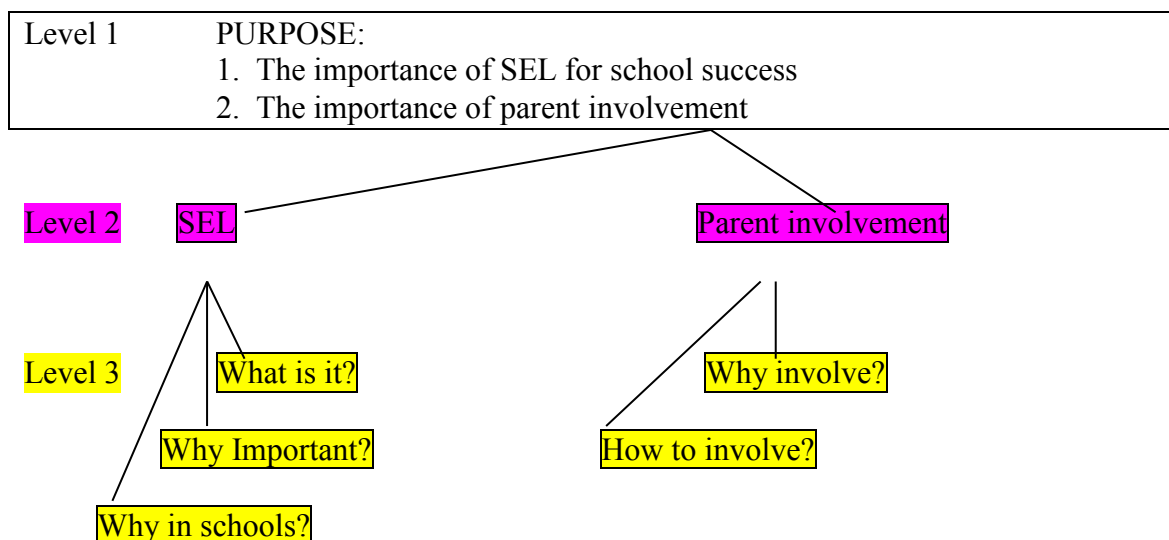


Figure 1. Initial coding frame for *Learning, Sharing Growing – SEL Together*.

At this point in the process, I saw the importance of specifically including teacher's skills and knowledge around SEL, directing teachers to specific programs, and assessing SEL skills, level 3 subcategories (see Figure 2). Supporting teachers in their SEL knowledge and skills would include the new BC Curriculum.

As I continued to read, add more research articles, re-read, and further analyze the codes, I saw that the new BC Curriculum needed to be a subcategory (level 2) in my coding frame, as the curriculum was playing an important role in the teaching of SEL in BC schools. From refining my research and going back to re-examine the data, I noticed that the assessment of SEL did not fit into my project, and thus, removed it from my coding frame (see Figure 3).

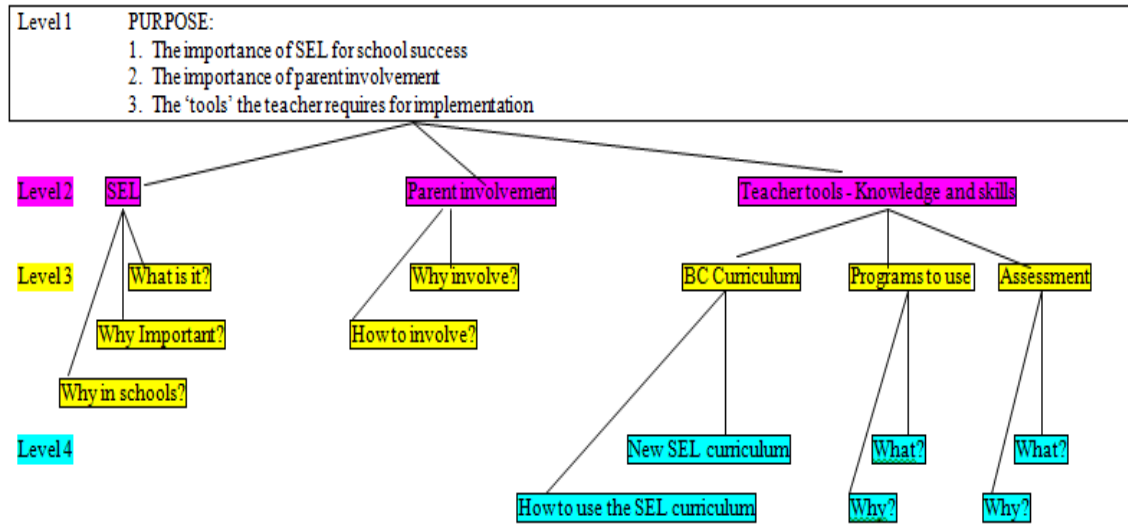


Figure 2. Modified coding frame for *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together*.

The QCA method allowed me to do a thorough examination of SEL, defining what SEL is, and explaining why SEL is important and why it is essential to teach SEL explicitly in schools. The importance of parent involvement in the school and teacher skills and knowledge for SEL instruction, with an emphasis on the redesigned BC curriculum, was also deciphered and interpreted from these articles and text (Schreier, 2012) (see Table 1).

Although 55 articles were read, highlighted, and coded, the content of 12 articles did not fit into any of the categories or subcategories of the coding frame. When I began my literature search, I thought social emotional learning and self-regulation were synonymous. As I read and began coding the articles, it became clear that these two terms were different, and it was the category of SEL, as defined by CASEL, that my research question, and thus my manual, were based upon.

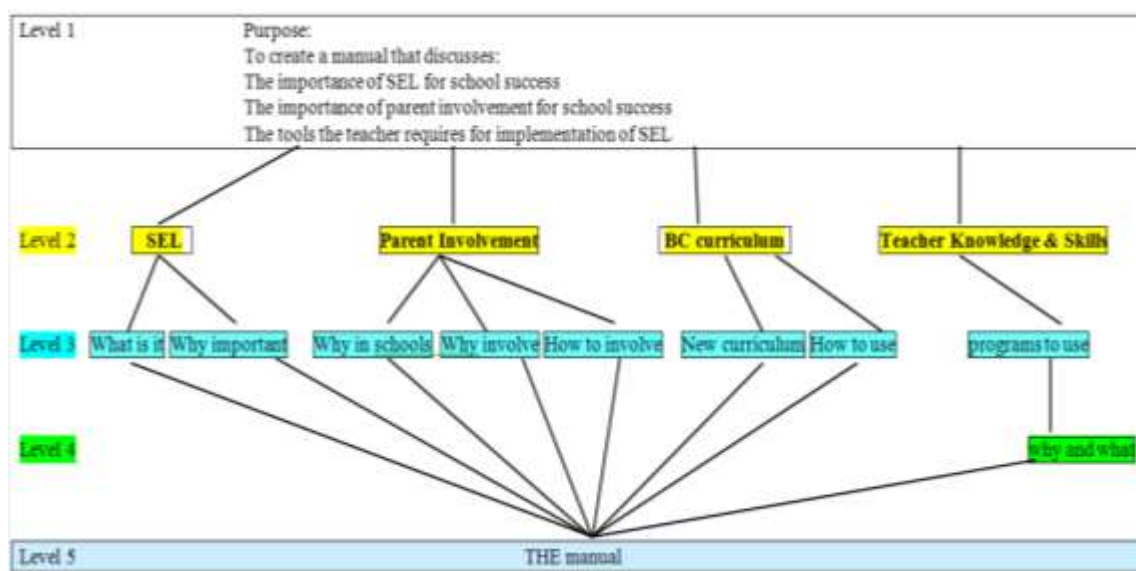


Figure 3. Second modified coding frame for *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together*.

I stopped searching for articles at 43 articles. As I read, re-read, coded, refined, and analyzed, I discovered that the information being presented was recurring and I was not gaining any new insights (Saldana, 2013). I had achieved saturation (Schreier, 2012). It was at this point in my research, I noticed overlap in the 43 articles (see Table 2) that were coded and analyzed. I divided my project into seven areas: the four categories of my final coding frame in level 3; SEL, SEL in schools, parent involvement, and teacher knowledge and skills; and chapter 1, introduction to chapter 2, and chapter 3, in order to ascertain the overlap.

The second part of my project was the organization phase; categorization and abstraction, interpretation, and representativeness (Elo et al., 2014; Elo & Kyngas, 2005). This phase united with Schreier's (2012) steps five through seven of QCA: trying out the coding frame, evaluating and modifying the coding frame, and main analysis. In this

Table 1

*Table Denoting Number of References Cited*

Main categories from coding frame	Number of citations in each category
SEL	13
Parent involvement	13
Teacher knowledge and skills	17
SEL in schools	17
Not on coding frame	
Research design	6
Complex learners	6

*Note.* BC Curriculum and Dockendorf is cited 26 times throughout the categories.

phase, I strove to make sense of the data and to reinforce the information being uncovered.

As I was trying out the modified coding frame, categorization and abstraction, I realized that I had shifted my thinking in regard to three categories. First, the new BC curriculum should not be a section on its own. It needed to be woven into all the other sections as foundational. A discussion about what it is and how SEL plays a key role in the new curriculum needed to be discussed. Secondly, another shift in my thinking occurred in the teacher knowledge and skills section. I was going to dictate what programs teachers should use to teach SEL to their students and parents and then I read about

Table 2

*Table Denoting Overlap of Articles*

Project Areas	Number of articles used	Number of articles used in other areas
SEL	8	7
SEL in schools	15	14
Parent involvement	7	4
Teacher knowledge/skills	11	10
Chapter 1	19	9
Introduction to chapter 2	8	6
Chapter 3	6	0

SAFE and the importance of teachers using this criterion to decide on the programs that address the strengths and needs for them and their students. Thirdly, the section on SEL in the schools was added. Via the research, I recognised that this needed to be a separate section, as the information was too specific to add into another section. Through this evaluative process, I modified my coding frame (see Figure 4). This modification allowed me to represent the data collected in a fulsome manner.

The third part of my project was the reporting phase (Elo & Kyngas, 2005) inclusive of Schreier's (2012) eighth step, interpreting and presenting my findings. Using the information from my research, I was able to construct a 40-page manual for kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers. Through QCA, I could present evidence to educators and provide a clear research-based overview on the importance of parent involvement in schools, and specifically SEL programs, the skills of the classroom teacher in regards to SEL, the role of SEL in the new BC curriculum, and what SEL is

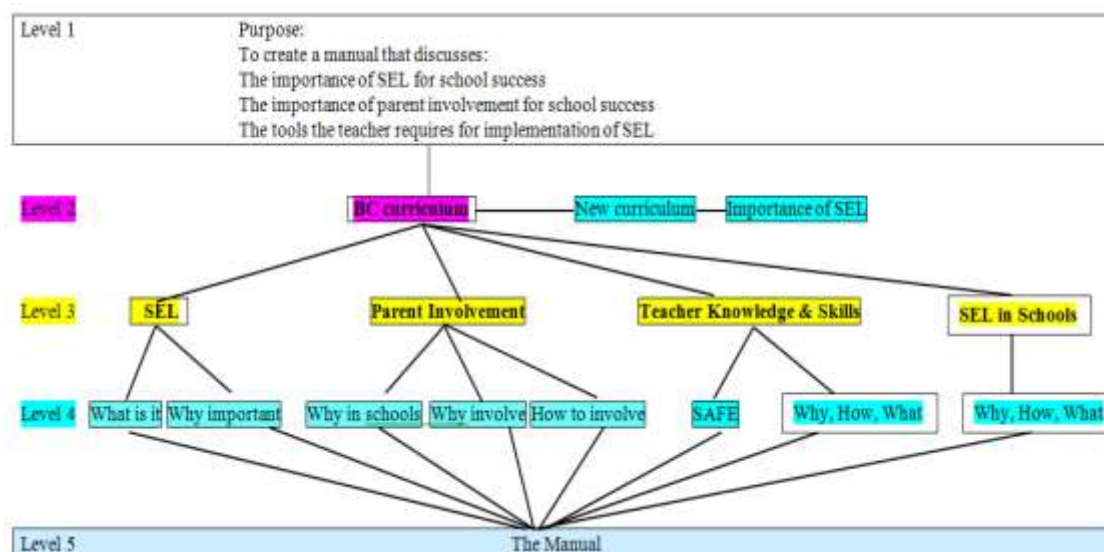


Figure 4. Final coding frame for *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together*.

(see Figure 5). I discussed each of these areas in-depth, linking the research to three planned parent afternoons called *Learning, Sharing, and Growing – SEL Together*.

In summary, this chapter provides an account of the steps taken from the beginning of the project to the culminating piece, the SEL manual, *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together*. It began with outlining the type of research methodology; an unobtrusive approach and my rationale for choosing this. This chapter then moved into discussing the method; qualitative content analysis that allowed me to uncover specific information with regards to SEL, parent involvement, teachers knowledge and skills, and SEL in schools, and to present the discovered content in a concrete and effective manner to persuade the reader to host student-parent SEL afternoons. I followed the three-phase plan: preparation, organization, and reporting out by Elo & Kyngas (2007). These phases fit together with Schreier's (2012) eight steps in QCA. Chapter 3 provided an account of my data collection, categorization, abstraction, interpretation, and results. As a beginning



*Figure 5.* Crucial Triad demonstrates the influential role that parents, teachers, and SEL instruction have on a student and their academic achievement.

researcher, this systematic, rule-guided text analysis allowed me to remain focussed, thoughtful, and open to opportunity throughout the research process.

Finally, due to the reflexive and flexible nature of QCA, a coding frame with five categories emerged and I could develop a practical and informative manual. This SEL manual, *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together* will provide kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers with a practical resource, so that they can learn, share and grow SEL with their students and their parents.



## Chapter 4: Discussion and the Manual

When I engage with teachers about social emotional learning (SEL), there is much curiosity and many questions are raised. What is SEL?; Where do I start?; What program or programs do I use?; How do I know that this is a good program to use?; How do I put it all together?; Why should I do SEL?; and, How do I engage parents?. These are just a small sample of the questions I have heard teachers ask regarding teaching SEL in their classrooms. SEL is now part of the newly redesigned BC curriculum and these questions take on more relevance to classroom teachers. There is increased pressure to meet the new curriculum and this pressure is evident in the addition of three mandatory curriculum implementation days in 2015-2016 and two additional days in 2016-2017 (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). The goal of this manual is to answer these questions and to provide kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers with a practical and pertinent tool to use in their classrooms to support SEL instruction and parent involvement.

Chapter 4 outlines the manual. Each part of the manual will be discussed and the format of each part explained with a direct link to the professional literature. The chapter will culminate with the 71-page side-fold booklet-style, research-based manual, *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together!*, that I developed. It was designed primarily for teachers in kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms; however, I believe that educators of all ages and grades could utilize the SEL information to support their understanding and teaching of SEL skills and the positive impact of parent involvement in their classrooms and schools.

The manual was created with research at the forefront. Through the reflective, reflexive, and flexible nature of qualitative content analysis (QCA), the themes that

ultimately and repeatedly emerged are the foundation for the manual. Considering the themes derived from the literature, SEL, parent involvement, teacher knowledge and skills, SEL in school, and the new BC curriculum, the manual could aid in the implementation of SEL practices in kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms and the inclusion of parents in the SEL conversation.

The manual was written in straightforward language that could be easily absorbed by classroom teachers. The manual was thoughtfully constructed to provide kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers with foundational information on SEL and to answer their initial questions (e.g., What is SEL?; Where do I start?; What program or programs do I use?; How do I know this is a good program to use?; How do I put it all together?; and, Why should I do SEL?) with research-supported answers. The manual then provides teachers with information on how to use the research and how to bring SEL and parents into their classrooms. The final part of the manual concludes with the resources required to plan and implement afternoons of parents and children learning, sharing, and growing together!

The manual is a sequenced continuum organized in three parts. Part 1, *Why SEL?*, builds understanding and knowledge of SEL, SEL in schools, parent involvement in SEL and teacher knowledge and skills. Part 2, *How will this look in my classroom?*, provides three pre-planned examples of the SEL afternoons. Part 3, *What else do I need?*, gives all the tools required for implementation of the SEL afternoons.

Part 1: *Why SEL?* This part has a dual purpose. First, it is an introduction to the manual and why it was written; and second, it is a discussion of what the literature says as gathered through QCA. This part references current and up-to-date literature in the

field of SEL, the literature supporting why SEL needs to be taught in schools, and the importance of parent involvement in schools, and it highlights teachers' SEL skills and knowledge. The new BC Curriculum is discussed throughout this part.

The information provided in the manual is directly linked to academic research in the field of SEL. The manual centres around the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2016a) definition of SEL, which is a

process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (What is Social emotional learning?).

Each topic in Part 1 is two pages long, except SEL in Schools, which is six pages long. The length of this topic is due to the information being provided about the new BC curriculum in conjunction with SEL in schools. This is an essential topic for today's classroom teachers as the accumulating research denotes the importance of SEL in schools, and it forms a foundation of the new BC curriculum.

Regarding parental involvement in schools and its place of importance in the manual, Fredericks, Weissberg, Resnik, Patrikakou and O'Brien (2005) stated "There is considerable evidence of lasting results in such areas as increased rates of high school graduation and diminished mental health problems and destructive behaviours. The investment of time and energy in partnerships pays rich dividends" (p. 4).

QCA of SEL research, intertwined with teacher knowledge and skills, indicated several teaching practices that classroom teachers, who will deliver the bulk of the SEL

instruction to their students (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011 and Meyers, Tobin, Huber, Conway, & Shelvin, 2015), need to encompass. Classroom teachers need to be

- explicit and intentional in the SEL instruction (Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009);
- acknowledge and embrace SEL competencies, and teach the SEL curriculum in a formal way (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011);
- weave SEL into the daily fabric of school life (BC Ministry of Education, 2016);
- engage with students in a positive way (CASEL, 2016a);
- understand their own emotional competence and knowledge (Zinsser, Denham, Curby, & Shewark, 2015);
- emphasize children's metacognition of their emotions and behaviours Ashdown & Bernard, 2011); and
- learn from colleagues on integrating SEL into the school day (Meyers et al., 2015).

Part 2: *How will this look in my classroom?* This part commences with an introduction to my journey with learning, sharing, and growing SEL in my classroom. At the forefront of how the learning, sharing, and growing afternoons will look in a classroom is based on the research discussed in Chapter 2 and highlighted in Part 1 of the manual. Each of the themes uncovered in the QCA is present in this part of the manual as the details of *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together!* unfold. SEL is front and center; how to involve parents is a key focus, how these SEL afternoons could unfold in your school and classroom is the major concentration, and finally, the knowledge and the

skills of the classroom teacher are supported with checklists and resources. Following the introduction, are getting-started inquiry questions for educators to begin their own SEL journey with the students and the parents. This part then details sequential, active, frequent, and explicit (SAFE) to determine what programs to use. I provide a blank SAFE and a completed sample version of SAFE using my three evidence-based programs. Also, provided in order for the classroom teacher to begin the planning process is a Year at a Glance worksheet using my three chosen programs, together with a blank version. Part 2 details three planned parent afternoons and provides a structure to assist with the planning of new afternoons: Welcome and Parent Session, Student's Teaching, and Gathering Time. An SEL topic, an art activity, a mindful activity, and a suggested book to purchase are provided for each afternoon. Each afternoon outline is two pages in length.

Part 3: *What else do I need?* This part will provide additional resources. It includes everything required to plan and execute the *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together!* afternoons. This part also includes a list of SEL research-based resource books for teachers that are appropriate for the kindergarten to Grade 3 level; a three-page list of my favourite classroom social emotional books; a two-page SEL checklist for self-reflection; a template for planning *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together!*; recipes and activities; copies of invitations to parents; letters to other adults inviting them to be a parent; examples of parent feedback; and budgeting information. *What else do I need?* is about getting started and about implementing three afternoons of *Learning, Sharing, Growing – SEL Together!*



# **SEL Together!!**

**Students! Parents! Teachers!**

A Manual for Kindergarten to Grade 3 Teachers

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## **Dedication**

This manual is dedicated to the best teachers a teacher could ask for — the children!! To all the students I have had the privilege to share a classroom with since 1988. Thanks for the knowledge, the laughter, the joy, the sharing, and the growing. A BIG thank you to your parents too!

This manual is also dedicated to all the fabulous kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers that I have had the pleasure to have as colleagues, to the dynamic educators that have mentored me, and to the incredible pre-service educators who are just beginning their journey.

## **Acknowledgements**

A BIG thank you to my amazing family. Mom and Dad, thank you for always encouraging me and for being my champion. Jim, Zoë, and Emma - just THANKS – for everything always!! Jay, the best brother a sister could have.

Meredith and Nancy, two amazing colleagues - thanks for taking the SEL journey with me and creating *Together We Learn and Grow* during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. You are great co-regulators. Your laughter, patience, and support continue to be invaluable. I appreciate you!!

Thank you, Dr. Andrew Kitchenham, my supervisor, for your guidance in helping me stay focused and for your quick responses. I am also thankful for my committee members, Barb Nichols and Dr. John Sherry. Barb, your knowledge and experience with the social emotional learning curriculum and working with children with different abilities was an excellent perspective to have in the development of my project. Your suggestions and encouragement were very valued. Dr. Sherry, thank you for your descriptive feedback and thought-provoking questions.

Dr. Linda O'Neill. Your positive attitude and cheerful disposition motivated me to push through! Thank you!

Nona Hogan, Lisa Woodward, and Tracy Froese - THANK YOU!!

## Manual Summary

This manual is to assist kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers in leading their students and their parents on a purposeful, explicit journey into and through the importance of social emotional learning (SEL). This manual provides information regarding social emotional learning, the importance of SEL in the school setting, the impact of parent involvement with SEL in the school setting, and the implication of teacher's knowing and explicitly teaching SEL to their students. The new BC curriculum is woven throughout the manual. The manual outlines the procedures for implementing three parent afternoons including suggested activities, program information using the SAFE criteria, storybook and teacher resources, copies of parent invitations, and much more!

♥ Indicates pages to photocopy



Note taking pages are on page 105



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## **PART ONE: WHY SEL?**

### **Introduction**

In the British Columbia school system, inclusion of children with complex learning needs (CLN) within the regular classroom is promoted whenever possible. Thus, the individual requirements of a child with CLN must be addressed within the context of the regular classroom by the generalist teacher. In my experience, children with CLN are often not diagnosed with a medical condition or designated with a category for educational funding.

In this manual, a complex learner is defined as a learner having a broad spectrum of intellectual and developmental deficits. These deficits in individuals will range from normal to obviously abnormal and distinctive (Astley, 2004). Astley (2004) and Clarren (2004), noted deficiencies in the central nervous system that create dysfunctional behaviours and issues with daily functioning. There are neurological impairments that include intellectual and learning disabilities (verbal and nonverbal), deficient executive functioning including but not limited to memory, reasoning, task flexibility and problem solving, discrepancy in speech/language functioning, increased rates of emotional disorders, behavioural regulation issues such as irritability, hyperactivity, perseveration and an inability to focus, and poor fine motor co-ordination.

In my practice as a classroom teacher in an inner-city school in northern BC and as the teacher facilitator for all four of the inner-city schools in my community, I have seen an increasing number of children entering the system or already in the system with CLN. In my new position as a teacher consultant with the Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (POPFASD), I continue to hear that the ratio of complex learners to typical learners is increasing. Elksnin and Elksnin (2003) also noted that there are an increasing number of children at-risk for school failure in regular education classrooms.

The number one concern I receive from classroom teachers is their learners are not equipped with the social emotional skills required for academic learning and that managing and responding to these behaviours competes with time that should be devoted to academic activities. This sentiment is supported in the research by Menzies and Lane

(2011). Bouffard's (2014) research demonstrated that when students can cope with their frustration and anger, listen to adults and peers, and get along with classmates, teachers can teach, and students can learn.



### **What is SEL?**

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the leaders in making evidence-based SEL an integral and integrated part of the school day, (2016a) identified five interrelated SEL core competencies:

1. self-awareness, (the ability to identify and assess personal emotions, interests, values, and strengths and limitations);
2. self-management, (recognizing, monitoring, managing, and expressing one's emotions, thoughts and behaviours in socially and culturally appropriate ways and in a variety of situations);
3. social awareness, (perspective taking and empathizing with others);
4. responsible decision making, (identifying, analyzing, evaluating and solving social problems in a reflective nature);
5. relationship skills, (the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships through effective communication).

SEL is defined by CASEL (2016a) as a

process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (What is Social emotional learning?).



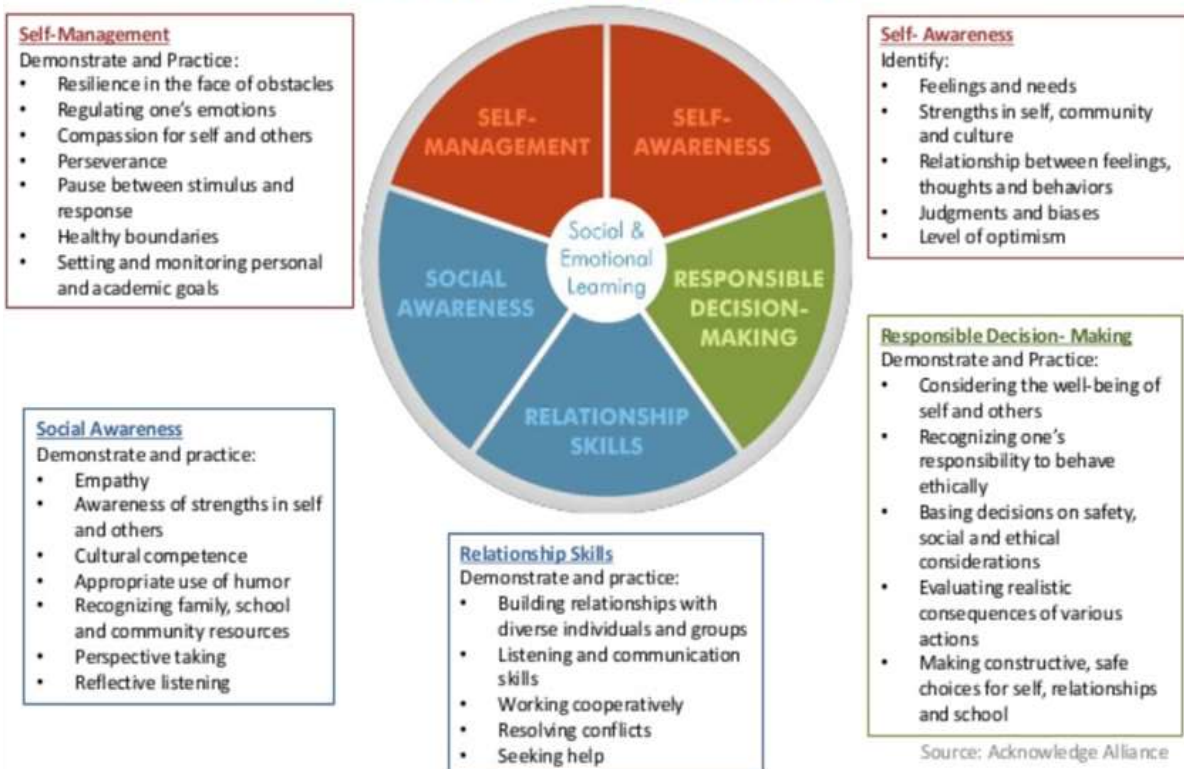
<http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/>

The Superintendent of Early Years, Ministry of Education and Provincial Office of the Early Years (MCFD), Dockendorf (2016) defined the personal and social (PS) competency of the new BC curriculum as a set of abilities that demonstrate a students' awareness, understanding, and appreciation of their identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society. This competency encompasses the skills students require to succeed as a BC educated citizen (Ministry of Education, 2016). The PS core competency should be employed daily in school as learners are engaged in activities where they are thinking, collaborating, and communicating to solve problems, addressing issues,

and making decisions (Dockendorf, 2016).

Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (2016), Denham and Brown (2010), Zins and Elias (2006) and Greenberg et al. (2003) concurred with this definition. These investigators further noted that the acquisition of these skills assists children to feel more confident and capable and to be more successful when developing and building friendships and resolving conflicts, to have persistence when challenges arise, and to demonstrate coping mechanisms to deal with anger and frustrations. Gaining these skills leads to organized behaviours that assist our learners in meeting short and long term goals (Denham & Brown, 2010). Denham and Brown (2010) noted that children who have a firm foundation of SEL skills have stronger grades and solid achievement later in their school career.

## SEL Core Competencies



<https://www.google.ca/url?sa=i&rc=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewic0a2LuMTAhVG0oMKHSFECtgQjRwlBw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.slideshare.net%2Fdcoughney%2Fsel-choice-session-slides-2014&psig=AFQjCNFA41Vvb1zMKXbpLq116ts-0zOm7A&ust=1493478717951371>

## SEL in Schools (and BC's new curriculum)

Greenberg et al. (2003) concluded SEL programs are fundamental to implement during the pre-school years to positively influence academic outcomes. Moreover, Denham, and Brown (2010) reported that children as young as preschoolers would have enhanced school experiences in the pre-school and elementary years, if they had emotional competence; the ability to demonstrate, manage and understand emotions, regulate behaviour, demonstrate appropriate decision making skills, and engage in sympathetic and empathetic behaviours (Denham & Brown, 2010).

Ashdown and Bernard (2011) concluded that social emotional skills are foundational for children's well-being and academic achievement.

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) determined that a reduction in conduct problems and emotional distress was also positively impacted by SEL instruction. An increase in a sense of well-being and academic achievement were also augmented. With mounting evidence of the academic benefits of developmentally and culturally-appropriate SEL instruction and application (CASEL, 2016a), the BC Ministry of Education (2016) has embedded SEL into the curriculum for kindergarten to Grade 12 and has promoted its daily occurrence in classrooms.

Durlak et al. (2011) stated that students who participated in SEL programs had higher academic performances than their peers, especially when the SEL programs executed the four interdependent characteristics.

SAFE criteria:

1. **sequenced** - connected and coordinated activities that are mastered sequentially;
2. **active** – a focus on engaging students in building SEL skills;
3. **focus** – ample time and attention on developing SEL skills; and
4. **explicit** – clear and specific SEL skills are targeted.

CASEL (2016a) concurred with these characteristics for an effective SEL program.

Zins and Elias (2006) validated that SEL and academic achievement are interwoven, and effective schools have coordinated and integrated instruction in both areas to capitalize on students' potential to succeed in

school and throughout their lives. The literature review by Zins and Elias (2006) noted students learn SEL skills the way they learn academic skills; learn, practice, and apply by engaging in positive activities in the context of a caring, safe, well-managed classroom and reinforced in the school, home and community.

The BC Ministry of Education's (2016), *Building Student Success: B.C.'s New Curriculum*, is a response to the demanding world students are entering whose end goal is the BC educated citizen. The educated citizen will be a skilled and productive worker contributing to society. This contribution will be thoughtful, respectful, cooperative, responsible, and principled. The educated citizen will be a flexible thinker who is both a critical and a creative thinker. They will confidently communicate knowledge on a variety of topics and make decisions independently. BC's educated citizens will be self-motivated and physically healthy. Dockendorf (2016) agreed that the new curriculum will prepare our learners to be proficient thinkers and communicators, who will be personally and socially knowledgeable in all areas of their lives. Dockendorf (2016) promoted the new BC curriculum as enhancing student's thinking, learning, and growing and will prepare them for a successful lifetime of learning in a constantly changing world.

Dockendorf (2016) highlighted the need for all students to develop social skills in order to engage in deep, transferable, and life-long learning, to be the BC educated citizen. This belief is embedded and evident in the new curriculum in the PS core competency, in the Big Ideas, the key concepts important in a curricular area of learning that contribute to future understanding, and the learning standards, the skills, strategies and processes that students develop over time, of physical and health education, specifically the curricular competency of mental well-being (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). The new BC curriculum through its concept-based learning and the core competencies is an active, authentic curriculum where students will engage in deeper learning, connect their learning to the real world, and have better academic achievement (BC Ministry of Education, 2016).

Joseph and Strain (2003) stated that successful SEL approaches are presented on a daily basis, use a systematic, intentional, direct approach, and teach the skills in inclusion. Nelson, Westhues, and MacLeod (2003) substantiated the claim that SEL programs had a greater positive effect on outcomes when the programs were more intense and taught over an



extended period of time. Additionally, Greenberg et al. (2003) explained social emotional skills are similar to other academic skills and the initial learning is enhanced over time with repeated teaching and practice.

Menzies and Lane (2011), focussing on positive behaviour support and the three-tiered model of prevention, argued that the kindergarten to Grade 3 school years are critical for a student's successful development of an academic base and social emotional skills. Furthermore, the authors stated, it is during these school years when the traditional school expectations of reading, writing and mathematics and behaviour are introduced and the patterns in children are developed and set for negotiating the school environment, work habits, and social interaction. Menzies and Lane (2011) reported that an effective SEL program is delivered to all children in a classroom by their classroom teacher. The authors (2011) further claimed that the SEL programs should include formal lessons.

Meyers, Tobin, Huber, Conway, and Shelvin (2015) studied the three-tiered model and concluded when SEL instruction is delivered to all children as part of the standard curriculum, this is a tier one intervention. Menzies and Lane (2011) and BC Ministry of Education (2016) concurred with this premise. Furthermore, Meyers et al. (2015) explained teacher schedules and school priorities regarding the role of social emotional learning must shift to accommodate SEL lessons during classroom instructional time and school staff must acquire new skills in order to implement SEL curricular competencies and model SEL core competencies.

According to Zins and Elias (2006), this tier one, is preventing behaviour problems and promoting social and emotional competence for all students. As well, smaller numbers of students who require more moderate to intensive SEL support to develop healthy behaviours, tier two and tier three interventions, can receive this support by expert school professionals, school counsellor, youth care worker, school psychologist or behaviour team consultant (Zins and Elias, 2006; Meyers et al., 2015). The three tiers are a continuum of services based on student needs (Zins and Elias, 2006). Zins and Elias (2006) stated that costs associated with providing support at the universal level, tier one, is a small cost per student.

Jones and Bouffard (2012) in the *Social Policy Report* for the Society for Research in Child Development reported well-designed and well-

implemented SEL programs are embedded into the school day as a complement to the curriculum rather than a conflict. Integrating, rather than distracting from, and reinforcing the teaching of SEL skills into daily interactions of students and school staff is low cost, time efficient and sustainable. Schools need to promote SEL and the SEL approaches used in a school need to be designed to match the needs and contexts of individual schools and the communities they serve (Jones and Bouffard, 2012).

Meyers et al. (2015) explained that schools are increasingly responsible for addressing children's social and emotional needs and the connection between SEL and academic outcomes are more recognized. Thus, Dockendorf (2016) in hand with the BC Ministry of Education (2016) championed the implementation of a systemic change, which is based on the principle of prevention and early intervention to include SEL into the BC curriculum. This change will prepare students for the future, the BC educated citizen. To this end, to be effective, SEL curricula requires support from the building administrators, a change in school culture (CASEL, 2016a), consultation and collaboration with parents (BC Ministry of Education, 2016; Meyers et al., 2015), and a change in how teachers and children interact around emotions and emotionally significant events in the classroom and school (CASEL, 2016a; Zinsler, Denham, Curby &, Shewark, 2015).



## Parent Involvement in Schools

Pryor and Pryor's (2009) research concluded that children whose parents were actively involved in their education had greater academic achievement. Sawyer (2015), creator of the BRIDGES framework, a model to support teachers in fostering parent involvement in schools, also surmised that parental involvement in a child's education fostered school success.

In addition to increased academic achievement, El Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drzal (2010) described an improvement in first, third, and fifth-grade children's classroom behaviour and emotional well-being with the involvement of parents.

The work of Egbert and Salsbury (2009) determined that involving parents in their children's school experiences created valued home-school relationships and empowered parents. The authors explained that this dynamic partnership can contribute to an increased sense of community for parents and student achievement. Furthermore, Egbert and Salsbury (2009) noted when children were excited about an activity and had the opportunity to share their new learning with a parent, the event was deemed successful.

Ule, Zivoder, and duBois-Reymond (2015) pointed out parents acknowledged their child's future not only depends on the work of the teacher but also on parents as co-educators. This co-teaching relationship is enhanced with communication and cooperation between the home and school and thus improved school outcomes, behavioural outcomes, and a good future. Successful academic achievement is attained when parents encourage, reinforce, and instruct children on developing academic self-efficacy along with social emotional self-efficacy.

CASEL researchers, Fredericks, Weissberg, Resnik, Patrikakou, and O'Brien (2005) defined SEL using the CASEL definition and championed parents as co-regulators for their children's emotional development as these skills are important for long-term health and happiness. Fredericks et al. (2005) reported parents and schools working together can play a focal role in supporting children's SEL for school success and life success. When parents and schools work closely together, have common expectations about acceptable behaviour and academics, students hear the same

messages at home and at school, the effects are doubly beneficial (Fredericks et al., 2005).

Zins and Elias (2006), in their literature review of SEL, stated “the most effective, sustained approaches involve students, parents, educators, and community members as partners in planning, implementing, and evaluating SEL efforts” (p. 2). They argued that this multi-stakeholder approach would be most effective in integrating SEL in the classroom.

## **Teachers and SEL**

Greenberg et al. (2003) argued that systematic, explicit SEL instruction should commence in pre-school and continue through high school. The research by Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, and Thornburg (2009), supported explicit, intentional instruction to ensure children's learning. Ashdown and Bernard's (2011) research reinforced the need for educators to use explicit and direct instructional practices that are contained in formal social and emotional lessons. Ashdown and Bernard (2011) further acknowledged that teachers needed to embrace the SEL competencies and teach the SEL curriculum in a formal way.

According to the BC Ministry of Education (2016), SEL is most effective when it is woven into the daily fabric of school life alongside the academic piece which is supported by Payton et al.'s (2008) research. These authors noted that significant outcomes in SEL skills, attitudes towards self and others, positive social behaviour, conduct problems, emotional distress and academic performance were achieved when a classroom-based SEL intervention was implemented by the classroom teacher. CASEL (2016a) highlighted engaging with students in positive ways and assisting them to sustain attention and stay calm will foster SEL together with academics. Dockendorf (2016) described teachers and students as creating a community of learners where everyone belongs and where emotions are openly acknowledged as part of the learning process. When the classroom is a place of feeling, and strengths and needs are recognized, then all students will be academically successful (BC Ministry of Education, 2016; Dockendorf, 2016). Moreover, Zinnser et al. (2015) determined teachers who are more emotionally knowledgeable may experience more success in the classroom or be able to recognize

the influence they are having on the student's SEL.

Durlak et al. (2011) and Meyers et al. (2015) believed that classroom teachers need to deliver the bulk of SEL instruction to their students but other school-based mental health professionals may provide additional support. In addition to delivering the SEL instruction, Ashdown and Bernard (2011) stated teachers need to emphasize children's metacognition of their emotions and behaviours. Meyers et al. (2015) described the necessity of teacher's learning from each other on how to integrate SEL into the school day.

Student's SEL skills are influenced by the classroom teacher's own social and emotional competence and pedagogical knowledge and skills (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Furthermore, Jones and Bouffard (2012) explained the importance of the school and classroom culture whereby the keys are healthy relationships, instructional support, classroom management, skills instruction, opportunities for skill use, and prosocial norms.

## **Conclusion**

There is a plethora of literature available about social emotional learning as information is easily found on the internet, in print resource materials, and in the research literature. The literature defines SEL and indicates the importance of intentional and explicit SEL being taught to our students, for both the proximal and distal benefits.

The review of the literature demonstrates the positive consequences of teaching SEL in schools. I could find no literature to contradict this repeated claim.

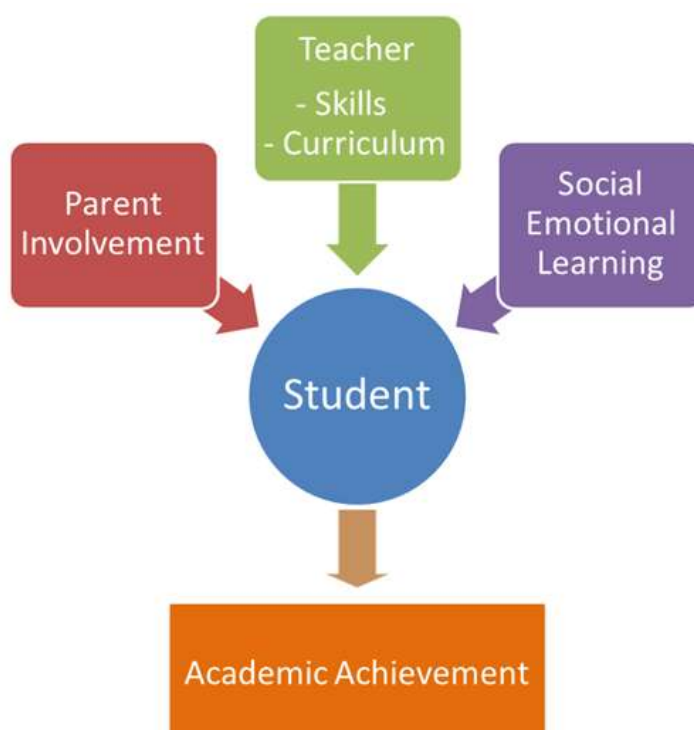
I was able to find literature on the importance of parental involvement in schools to enhance academic achievement and how this involvement assists with an increase in SEL skills.

The teacher's role in SEL instruction is fundamental to its successful implementation. The literature identified and answered several questions that teachers need to be cognisant of when planning for and teaching SEL: who they are as social and emotional people, what their beliefs and attitudes about SEL are, how they manage their own emotional responses, how they teach the SEL skills, when they teach and reinforce SEL skills, and

which SEL resources they decide on and why.

The literature indicates that to increase school success for kindergarten to Grade 3 students, educators need to embrace SEL in their classrooms daily. The path the literature is directing educators to take is one of high-quality instruction and universal interventions, tier one, for all children in the general education classroom, taught by the classroom teacher.

This manual for kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers could assist teachers in leading their students and their parents, together, on a purposeful explicit journey into and through SEL.



## **PART TWO: HOW WILL THIS LOOK IN MY CLASSROOM?**

### **Introduction**

In the general elementary school population, every classroom has learners with complex needs. Some research demonstrated that SEL is the key to the complex learner's school success (Bouffard, 2014; Gewertz, 2003; Mindness et al., 2008). CASEL (2016a) stated that using teacher-focused SEL programs not only augments student social emotional skills, but also trains teachers to be more emotionally supportive and responsive of their students and to practise positive discipline.

There is growing literature that supports the need for explicitly teaching SEL skills to complex learners and overtly educating parents on the importance of SEL (CASEL, 2016a; Denham & Brown, 2010; Menzies & Lane, 2011). Kalberg and Buckley (2007) supported genuine family involvement, as the teacher moves in and out of a child's life while the family is prevalent throughout the child's entire schooling. Shanker (2012) concurred that family involvement is imperative for successful SEL and positive school achievement. CASEL (2016a) further supported the school-family dyad as it ensures uniformity in the messages students obtain and the practices they experience over a variety of social settings.

The new BC Curriculum, *Building Student Success* (BC Ministry of Education, 2016) fosters social emotional learning in the classroom by including the PS competency as one of three core competencies and the learning standard of Physical and health education (PHE) for all students. According to the BC Ministry of Education (2016), the core competency, PS, along with the core competencies of communication (C) and thinking (T) are the center of the new curriculum and are to be evident in every area of learning. PHE in conjunction with the core competencies, are supporting the development of students who are competent thinkers, deep learners and communicators, and who are personally and socially competent in all areas of their lives (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). The learning standard, PHE, to be reported on every term, has social emotional skills as a focus in three of the five Big Ideas. Although SEL is explicitly taught in the PHE, the Ministry document (2016) states the competencies are to be distinctively apparent in each subject area. The

PS competency includes positive personal and cultural identity, personal awareness and responsibility, defined as social and emotional health, and social responsibility. Thus, the new BC curriculum has given SEL a place of importance.

In January 2013, I heard Dr. Stuart Shanker talk about the importance of parental involvement at school in the social emotional learning of their children. It is crucial to teach children SEL strategies and language but without parents knowing and understanding along with them, these important lifelong skills remain at school. One week after listening to Dr. Shanker, along with my colleagues Nancy and Meredith, we created a three-part initiative entitled, *Together We Learn and Grow*. We would teach, model and practice SEL skills with our students. Once a term, we would have our parents in and the students would teach them all that they had learned and practiced about SEL. These were joyful and engaging afternoons. Grandparents who had not been in a school in 50 years, parents who live with addiction issues, parents who had monitoring devices on their ankles, parents who did not want to be there, were there, learning and laughing along with their child.

It was running this initiative for two years that got me percolating the idea of a manual for my kindergarten to Grade 3 colleagues. The afternoons were a lot of preparation and work, but the positives, both proximal and distal, far outweighed any negatives. *Together We Learn and Grow* were successful afternoons because the children were excited to share their SEL knowledge, their new SEL learning, and the SEL activities with their parents. Having witnessed the parental joy of learning alongside their child, parent self-efficacy, the enhanced relationships between home and school, a greater sense of community, and an increase in parental engagement, cemented the importance of involving parents in SEL skill development.



## Getting Started!

There are points to ponder as you begin to plan your *Learning, Sharing, Growing—SEL Together* afternoons. Be both reflexive and reflective in your answers. Make a note beside each query.

Points to Ponder	Note
Is your school culture welcoming?	
Are you ready to nurture and build partnerships/relationships with parents?	
Is SEL embedded into your daily classroom work?	
Who is going to be involved in your afternoons?	
Will you co-plan?	
Will you co-teach?	
When are you going to meet?	
How often are you going to meet?	
Where are you going to meet?	
What evidence-based programs will you use?	
Does your program follow the SAFE criteria?	
Does your district have Professional Learning Communities? (PLC)	
Does your district have Learning Team Grants (LTG) or other opportunities to work collaboratively?	

Can your administration assist you with the time to plan?	
Who else in your school can assist you?	
Have you informed your secretary, administration, and custodian that these afternoons are occurring?	
What will your budget look like? (see page 98)	
Who will do the purchasing?	
How will you gather/invite adults to ensure that each student has a parent in the classroom? (see page 67)	
Who will welcome your parents and provide them with the background information?	
Is there one adult that can support the grade 7's as they babysit younger siblings?	
Who will take the pictures? Be your photographer?	
What will your invites, reminders, and thank you cards look like?	
How will you begin and wrap up each classroom session?	
How will you wrap up each gathering?	
How will you make this sustainable?	

## Who can be a Parent?

Invited parents can come from a variety of places in the community. I have listed the people that I used for *Together We Learn and Grow*. Ask yourself two questions: (1) Where are my community connections? (2) Who are my community connections?

- ☐ School librarian
- ☐ School secretary
- ☐ School learning assistance teacher
- ☐ School social worker
- ☐ School counsellor
- ☐ School administrators
- ☐ School education assistant
- ☐ School Aboriginal Education Worker
- ☐ School and district youth care worker
- ☐ Neighbors
- ☐ District support staff (e.g., principal of student support services)
- ☐ School Board employees (e.g., superintendent)
- ☐ Older sibling
- ☐ District teachers
- ☐ RCMP/Fire Fighters
- ☐ Art gallery personnel
- ☐ Aunt or uncle
- ☐ Public library personnel
- ☐ Foresters
- ☐ BCTF local union
- ☐ Retired teachers

## **SAFE Criteria**

Durlak et al. (2011) and CASEL (2016a) concluded that students who participated in SEL programs had higher academic performances than their peers, especially when the SEL programs executed the four interdependent characteristics of the SAFE criteria.

### **Sequenced**

- Behaviours and skills are broken down into smaller steps
- Sequentially mastered
- Connected and coordinated sequence of activities that link the learning steps
- Opportunities provided to practice the learning steps

### **Active**

- Active forms of learning that require learners to actively use the material - i.e.: role playing or behavioural rehearsal
- Practice, practice, practice

### **Focused**

- Time set aside for SEL development
- Attention devoted to teaching and learning SEL skills

### **Explicit**

- Clear and specific social emotional learning objectives for educator and learner

These practices are important in combination with one another rather than as independent factors.

Safe Checklist

Program/Resource & Term	Sequenced	Active	Focused	Explicit
MindUp (Term 1)	✓	✓	✓	✓
ALERT (Term 2)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kelso's Choice (Term 3)	✓	✓	✓	✓

Program/Resource & Term	Sequenced	Active	Focused	Explicit
(Term 1)				
(Term 2)				
(Term 3)				

## Year at a Glance

	Evidence-based program	Date of parent afternoon
Term 1	MindUp	November
Term 2	Alert Program – How Does Your Engine Run?	March (prior to spring break)
Term 3	Kelso's Choice	Early June

	Evidence-based program	Date of parent afternoon
Term 1		
Term 2		
Term 3		

### Three Months at a Glance

*Month of* \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>

*Month of* \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>

*Month of* \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>

## **At a Glance - Why Use?**

*Learning, Sharing, Growing—SEL Together!* is the culmination of prior social emotional learning. Year at a Glance and Three Months at a Glance are important for the classroom teacher to use to ensure the daily explicit teaching of SEL. Be cognisant to incorporate the mindful language and the social emotional skills of the resource into your daily schedule, embedding it into your community of learners. All the skills the students are teaching their parent in the parent afternoon have been explicitly taught, practiced and applied over three months. This teaching opportunity increases the students understanding of the SEL skill and is a point of pride.

## **In the Words of a Pseudo-parent**

"It is difficult to portray in words how the open and gentle approach that the educators involved in the SEL afternoons took to make parents feel more and more at ease."

"I just loved how confidently the students were able to teach their parents. I know from my own SEL adventures, many parents were inspired by their child's ability to help them as adults."



## The Afternoons

Our afternoons ran from 12:45pm – 2:35 pm. Each of our afternoons followed the same format:

- Welcome and Parent Session
- Student's Teaching
- Gathering Time

On the following pages, three afternoons are planned for you.

♥See template on page 86 to plan your afternoons.

We want each child to have a parent to teach. What is a parent? For the sake of consistency and clarity, we used the definition of parent from the Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary. The Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary (2016) defined parent as one that begets or brings forth offspring and a person who brings up and cares for another. This is a noun. In this manual, parent is also a verb, to be or act as a parent (Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary, 2016).

For every session, we provided free babysitting to younger siblings. This service allowed parents to focus on the information being taught by our school counsellor and to give one-on-one attention to their child during the student teaching time.

During parent afternoons, we assigned someone to be the photographer, documenting the interactions between the student and the parent. These pictures were then shared in the PowerPoint at the Welcome and Parent Session, printed and given to students to take home, and used as part of the THANK YOU to the parents.

## **Term 1 - begin explicit instruction in September**

Resource - MindUp

Parent afternoon - November

### A. Welcome and Parent Session

12:45 -1:00 Parents are greeted at the main door of the school and directed to the library.

1:00 - 1:20 Using a PowerPoint, School counsellor shares information about mindful education and social emotional learning — what it is and why is it important. Provide opportunities for parent reflection and engagement. Parents are each given a calming glitter bottle. Mindful breathing is discussed and taught to the parents. (Calming glitter bottles were made by my class for all 36 families. ♥Recipe on page 88). Pictures of the parents and their children are also in PowerPoint.

### B. Student's Teaching

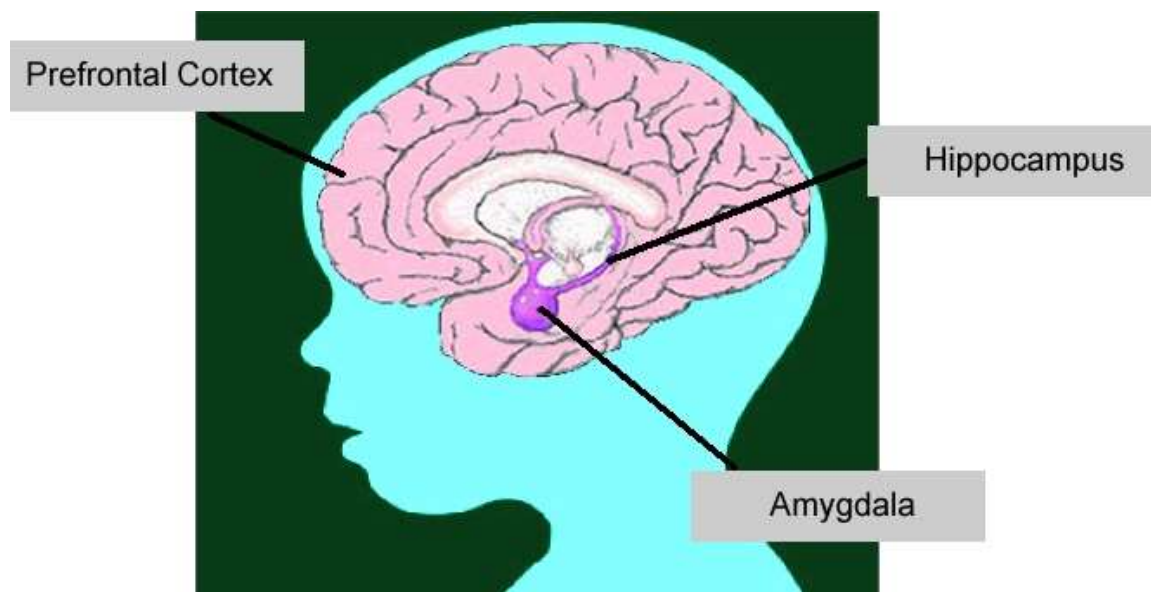
1:20 Parents are brought to the classrooms. All children have a parent to teach.

- Classroom teachers (CT) welcome parents and go over agenda for the afternoon.
- Children teach their parents about the 3 parts of the brain and tell what these brain parts do – prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus. Each child has a photocopy of a brain and the words and definitions – they can either print or cut and paste the terms and definitions. When talking about the amygdala, the children and parent can use the glitter bottle to practice mindful breathing.
- Children and parent make a pinwheel. ♥Instructions on page 90. Children teach parents about deep belly breathing using the pinwheel. The exhale breath will make it spin.
- Whole group breathing activity X3 - with chime, glitter bottle, and blowing on pinwheel.
- Sing the brain song from the MindUp program – have words so parents can join in on the second time through.

- Share the give-away book *Your Fantastic Elastic Brain – Stretch It, Shape It* by JoAnn Deak. Children teach their parent how to partner read and then explore the book together. If needed (if time) do a book search (i.e.: on what page can you read about the amygdala? On page 7 what 2 brain parts are discussed? What can these brain parts do for you?
- \*\* have this ready prior to the afternoon).
- Gather the group back together and do chime breathing before moving to the meals room for...

-  
C. Gathering Time.

- CT to thank parents for attending afternoon and summarize learning.
- Students entertain the parents.
- CT reminds parents about the date of the next afternoon and welcomes them to celebrate this afternoon with food.



## **Term 2 -begin explicit instruction in November/December**

Resource — Alert Program – How Does Your Engine Run?

Parent afternoon - March (prior to spring break)

### A. Welcome and Parent Session

12:45 – 1:00 Parents are greeted at the main door of the school and directed to the library.

1:00 - 1:20 Using a PowerPoint, School Counsellor reviews our first afternoon together, about mindful education and social emotional learning. Introduces the new topic of *How Does Your Engine Run?* Provide opportunities for parent reflection and engagement. Each parent is given a magnetic speedometer (made prior to the afternoon)

♥ copy on page 89. Parents are given different scenarios and are asked to indicate and discuss how their body runs at different times, in different light, in different temperatures, with different people, when they are hungry. . . And what can be done to change those speeds. Pictures of the parents and their children are also in PowerPoint.

### B. Student's Teaching

1:20 Parents are brought to the classrooms. All children have a parent to teach.

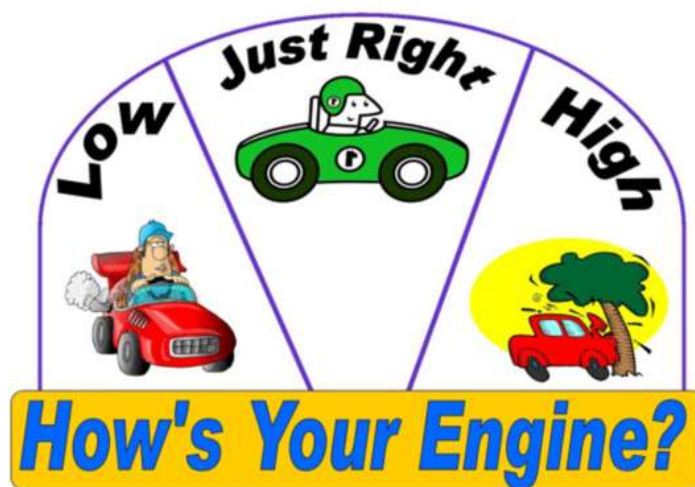
- Classroom teachers (CT) welcome parents and go over agenda for the afternoon.
- Children reteach parents about chime breathing and as a group – do a chime breathing X2.
- Children teach their parents the Lazy Eight breathing. It looks like a race track (they take this home) ♥ sample on page 92
- Parents share the magnetic speedometer with their child and what they learned in the library. Children add in the information they know about the Alert speedometer.
- Cut, paste, conversation activity. Using black and white situation pictures from the Alert Program (or gather your own) discuss are the situations low, just right, or high. The scenario pictures should elicit conversation and some laughs. ♥ sample on page 91

- CT stops group part way through activity - do an action/rowdy song with the group (brings you high). CT explains what happens. Continue to work on activity.
- CT stops group another time and demonstrates how to bring group down to a lower engine speed, sing a slow/gentle song. Continue to work on activity.
- Gather the group back together and do chime breathing before moving to the meals room for...

-  
C. Gathering Time

- CT to thank parents for attending afternoon and summarize learning.
- Students entertain the parents.
- CT reminds parents about the date of the next afternoon and welcomes them to celebrate this afternoon with food.

The give-away book is *The Busy Body Book* by Lizzy Rockwell



<https://autismhopealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/The-Alert-Program.png>

### **Term 3 –begin explicit instruction after spring break**

Resource — Kelso's Choice

Parent afternoon - early June

#### A. Welcome and Parent Session

12:45 – 1:00 Parents are greeted at the main door of the school and directed to the library.

1:00- 1:20 School Counsellor reviews 2 prior sessions, focussing on mindful education, social emotional learning, and *How Does Your Engine Run?* Using a PowerPoint, today's discussion is on making choices around big and small problems and the resource *Kelso's Choice*. Parents will watch the video 'What is Kelso's Choice?'. They will receive the Kelso handout with the 9 options for making good choices. Each option will be explained and discussed. Provide opportunities for parent reflection and engagement. Pictures of the parents and their children are also in PowerPoint.

#### B. Student's Teaching

1:20 Parents are brought to the classrooms. All children have a parent to teach.

- Classroom teacher (CT) welcome parents and go over agenda for the afternoon.
- Children review deep belly breathing with parents and as a group chime breathing X2.
- Children teach their parents about the 9 Kelso Choices using handout parents received in their session.
- Sing the Kelso song and have the words so parents can join in on the second time through.
- Play Kelso Bingo—available on the internet. When the choice is drawn, children explain the choice, when and where it can be used, and in what tone it could be said.
- Parents and children will create a breathing tool using large feathers with sturdy stalks, sinew and 10 pony beads each. The pony beads are put on the sinew and the sinew is tied to the stalk of

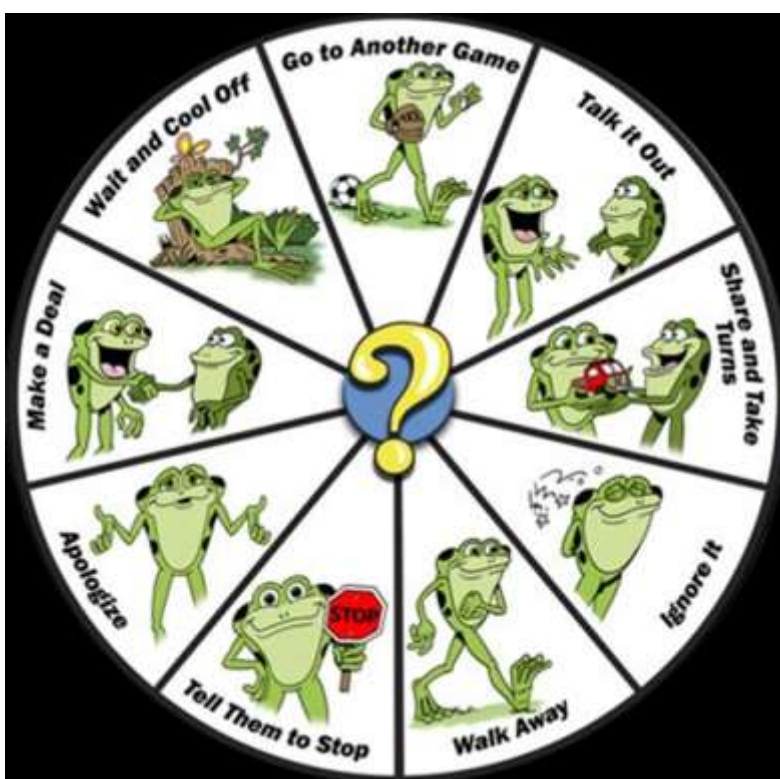
the feather. Big belly breaths are needed to make the feather move. Parents and children can practice deep belly breathing.

- Gather the group back together and do chime breathing before moving to the meals room for...

### C. Gathering Time

- CT to thank parents for attending afternoon and summarize learning.
- Students entertain the parents.
- CT reminds parents about the date of the next afternoon and welcomes them to celebrate this afternoon with food.

The give-away book is *Do Unto Otters* by Laurie Keller



[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-srmmF5x\\_7XU/UEvdcPO3X2I/AAAAAAAAAa8/FCb\\_UVRK3xo/s1600/kelsos\\_wheel.png](http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-srmmF5x_7XU/UEvdcPO3X2I/AAAAAAAAAa8/FCb_UVRK3xo/s1600/kelsos_wheel.png)

## PART THREE: WHAT ELSE DO I NEED?

### Teacher Evidence-based SAFE Resource Books

As you choose an evidence-based SEL program that follows the SAFE criteria ensure that the material matches the needs of your learners. Always consider your particular school environment or classroom setting.

Evidence-based SEL program are:

- field tested for effectiveness
- strategically developed to target a specific area
- based on theoretical constructs known to be effective with children in the school setting
- sequential with a logical flow of content
- minimizing preparation time
- already tested ideas regarding implementation

Below are evidence-based SEL programs that I have used and that work for complex learners:

- Social Thinking ([socailthinking.com](http://socailthinking.com))
  - You are a Social Detective
  - Superflex: A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum
- Zones of Regulation ([zonesofregulation.com](http://zonesofregulation.com))
- Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum ([cfchildren.org](http://cfchildren.org))
- Alert Program for Self-Regulation ([alertprogram.com](http://alertprogram.com))
- Kelso Choices: Conflict Management Skills Program ([kelsoschoice.com](http://kelsoschoice.com))
- MindUp Curriculum ([thehawnfoundation.org](http://thehawnfoundation.org))



## Classroom Social Emotional Books

There is a plethora of fabulous social emotional books for your classroom. Here is my 'go-to' list that you can share with your students. These books will support in developing the skills as life-long social emotional learners.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day	Judith Viorst
Anatomy of Crankenstein	Samantha Berger
Anna Angryaurus	Brian Moses & Mike Gordon
A Walk in the Rain with a Brain	Edward M.Hallowell
Beautiful Oops!	Barney Saltzberg
Cool Down and Work Through Anger	Cheri J. Meiners
Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late!	Mo Willems
Don't Squeal Unless it's a Big Deal – A Tale of Tattletales	Jeanie Franz Ransom
Do Unto Otters – A book about manners	Laurie Keller
Everybody feels Happy	Jane Bingham
Everybody feels Sad	Jane Bingham
Fantastic Elastic Brain	JoAnn Deak
Fill a Bucket – a Guide to Daily Happiness for young children	Carol McCloud & Kathrine Martin
Fin Throws a Fit	David Elliott
Happy	Mies Van Hout
Have You Filled A Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids	Carol McCloud
Help – a Story of Friendship	Holly Keller
How do Dinosaurs Say I'm Mad	Jane Yolen & Mark Teague
How Full is Your Bucket? for Kids	Tom Rath & Mary Reckmeyer
I'm Sorry	Sam McBratney
I'm Telling the Truth – a first look at honesty	Pat Thomas
Instead – Helping 5 -11 year olds survive and thrive at school	M-C Bailey-McKenna
It's Okay to Be Different	Todd Parr
It's Okay to Make Mistakes	Todd Parr
I will never, NOT EVER eat a Tomato	Lauren Child
Llama Llama and the Bully Goat	Anna Dewdney
Making Friends is an Art	Julia Cook

Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda	Lauren Alderfer
Mother, Mother, I want Another!	Maria Polushkin Robbins
Mouse was Mad	Linda Urban
My Gratitude Jar	Kristin Wiens
My Mouth is a Volcano	Julia Cook
Only One You	Linda Kranz
Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed	Emily Pearson
Soda Pophead	Julia Cook
Take the Time	Maud Roegiers
The Book of Awe	Natasha Tessier
The Busy Body Book	Lizzie Rockwell
The Feel Good Book	Todd Parr
The Feelings Book	Todd Parr
The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes	Mark Pett & Gary Rubinstein
The I'm NOT Scared Book	Todd Parr
The Important Book	Margaret Wise Brown
The Peace Book	Todd Parr
The Pout-Pout Fish	Deborah Diesen
The Pout-Pout Fish Goes to School	Deborah Diesen
The Recess Queen	Alexis O'Neill & Laura Huliska-Beit
The Story of Ferdinand	Munro Leaf
The Thankful	Todd Parr
The Way I Feel	Janan Cain
The Worst Day of My Life EVER!	Julia Cook
Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day	Jamie Lee Curtis
Two	Kathryn Otoshi
Walter Was Worried	Laura Vaccaro Seeger
What Are You so Grumpy About?	Tom Lichtenheld
What Does It Mean To Be Present?	Rana DiOrio
What is a Thought? A Thought is A lot	Jack Pransky & Amy Kahofer
When I Feel Angry	Cornelia Maude Spelman
When My Worried Get Too Big!	Kari Dunn Buron
When Sophie Gets Angry – Really, Really Angry	Molly Bang
Whole Body Listening Larry At School!	Elizabeth Sautter & Kristen Wilson
William Worrydactyl	Brian Moses & Mike Gordon
Will you Fill My Bucket? Daily Acts of Love Around the World	Carol McCloud & Karen Wells

## SEL Checklist

This checklist of research-based SEL strategies is provided to assist educators in being reflective in their daily practice. Ask yourself the question - **Do I practice these strategies in my classroom?** If you do, give yourself a check and reflect on the next strategy. If you don't use the SEL strategy, reflect and ask yourself why? It is OK if you don't 😊 choose strategies that work for you and your students.

### Do I . . .

- ☐ build repeat exposure to experiences that build capacity?
- ☐ teach and practice activities that help children maintain a comfortable state of arousal (e.g., physical activity, deep breathing, and visualization)?
- ☐ provide additional support for activities and times of day that are particularly difficult?
- ☐ provide children with a visual template for how to complete tasks or sequence directions?
- ☐ help children identify their window of tolerance for classroom activities?
- ☐ practice Low and Slow?
  - lower the volume and pitch of your voice?
  - lower your heart rate?
  - slow down your speech?
  - slow down your body movements?
  - Slow down your agenda (take your time)?
- ☐ have exercise breaks scheduled into the daily plan?
- ☐ have mindful activities incorporated into your daily plan?
- ☐ use T-charts to specify what expected behaviours look and sound like?
  - review T-charts at the beginning of activities
- ☐ use rehearsal strategies to practice behaviours for new situations?
- ☐ use the 'Social Detective' to help children observe what other people do in various situations?
- ☐ create a climate of emotional safety?
- ☐ recognize early warning signs of dysregulation and communicate these to the student?

- ☐ provide a safe place to cool down before discussing the out of control behaviour?
- ☐ have a 'chill' box with self-regulating tools (i.e. glitter bottle, squeeze toy, playdough, books, coloring book, bubbles)?
- ☐ have a daily schedule?
  - o is it visual?
  - o do you stick to it?
- ☐ have clear transition rituals?
- ☐ prepare children in advance for unavoidable changes?
- ☐ provide children with a variety of modalities that they can use to express themselves?
- ☐ provide safe opportunities to explore the full range of human emotions through role play, drama, art, and literature?
- ☐ provide opportunities to observe how they feel by using a rating scale or emotion thermometer (e.g. tired, sad, happy)
- ☐ read stories that explore and illustrate the whole range of human emotions?
- ☐ talk to your students about how you are feeling and things you do to help yourself feel happy and in control?
  - o remain in control of your own emotions?
- ☐ have a consensus among adults about behavioural expectations for the learner?
- ☐ use journaling and writing activities to help children find the words to describe feeling states?
- ☐ teach children to notice how they feel – self-monitoring?
- ☐ teach children to use scripts or self-talk to manage situations that are difficult for them?

Credit to:

Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt (S.E.Craig)

CASEL [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

Calmer Classrooms, Child Safety Commissioner, (2007)

Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom (Merrel &Guedner)

Created by: Jodee Sayle

## ***Learning, Sharing, Growing—SEL Together!***

### **Afternoon Template**

**Theme** \_\_\_\_\_

Who is taking pictures? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Welcome and Parent Session:**

- ☐ Greet parents at front door of school and direct to large meeting room
  - o Who \_\_\_\_\_
  - o Time \_\_\_\_\_
  - o Where \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Introductory information session
  - o Who \_\_\_\_\_
  - o What is the pre-teaching concept \_\_\_\_\_
  - o Time \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Student's Teaching:** Time \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Parents move to classrooms
  - o Classroom teacher pairs up adults and students
  - o Welcoming message and agenda
- ☐ Teaching time
  - Teacher role \_\_\_\_\_
  - Student role \_\_\_\_\_
  - o Story, video \_\_\_\_\_
  - o Art activity \_\_\_\_\_
  - o Mindful activity \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Gathering Time:**

- ☐ 15 minutes prior to dismissal
- ☐ Children and adults move to large space (i.e.: meals room, library, or multipurpose room).
  - o Where \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Children will 'seat' their adult and then come to the staging area. The classroom teacher will thank the adults in the room, summarize learning, and remind them of the next date.
  - o When \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Children will 'entertain' the adults with a song, a poem, a finger play, or Readers Theater related to theme.
  - o What\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Time to eat, do feedback and visit. Are there any parameters of the eating and sharing of food?
  - o Directions\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ As children and adults are leaving, give one story book to each child.

**\*\*Think about indoor shoes, outdoor shoes, coat and backpacks. How will this be dealt with for a smooth transition at the end of the day?**

---

**Prep work: Resources required for the afternoon**

Activity	What needs to be done	Who
Babysitting	Organize Buy thank you gift	
Introductory session	PPT Parent activity Prep	
Classroom session		
Art supplies		
Mindful activity		
Gathering Time	Food Song/poem Feedback	

## Calming Glitter Bottle

### Materials needed:

- 1 plastic drinking bottle - 500 ml bottles are a good size for holding
- Elmer's clear glue
- Glitter
- Jewels
- Hot tap water
- Glue gun



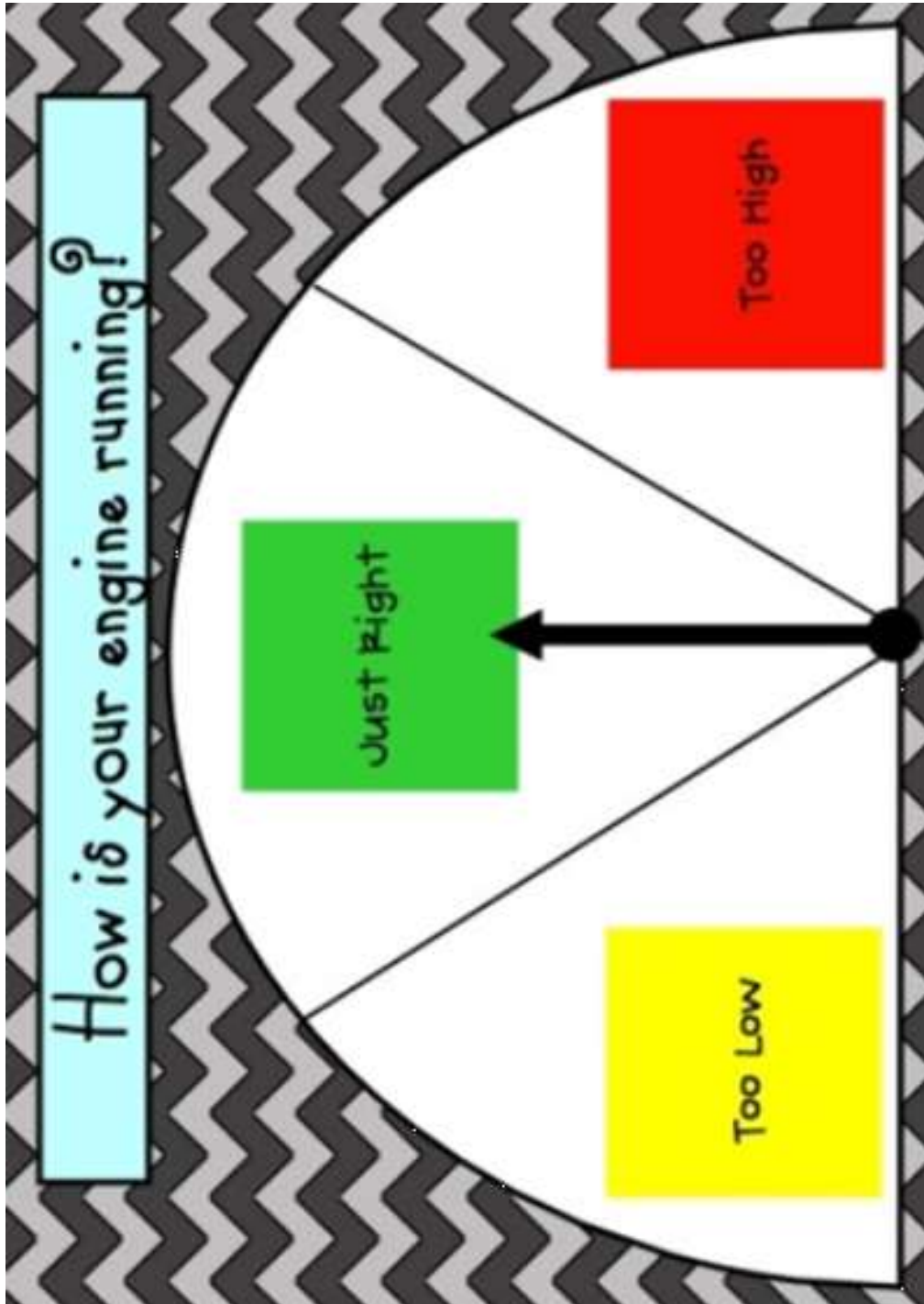
### Steps:

1. Clean inside and outside of plastic bottles - keep lid
2. Fill each jar with 4 cm of Elmer's clear glue  
Add more if you want the movement to be slow and less if you want the movement to be fast
3. Add in glitter
4. Add in jewels
5. Fill the bottle with hot tap water to just below the neck of the bottle.
6. Glue gun the lid on
7. Shake

## How Does Your Engine Run—Speedometer

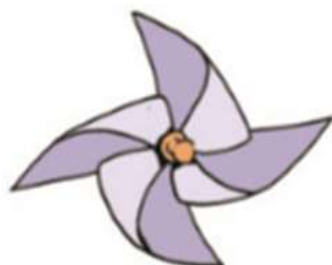
Photocopy in colour. Laminate. Add magnets to back. Create an arrow and add arrow with split brad.

<https://www.google.ca/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewj-0sIP28XTAhUm8YMKHTTcAfoQJRwlBw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fbellejane%2Falert-program-ideas%2F&psig=AFQjCNHYWDk7iWW5E6QGkom9O2xTpEaxNA&ust=1493419444778325>





## Making a Pinwheel



### Pinwheel Instructions

March is a great time to make pinwheels. Pinwheels are easy to make. As long as you begin with a square, the size of your pinwheel is up to you. If you decide to make a big pinwheel, be sure your dowel is longer.



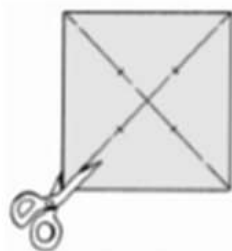
1. Begin with a square of paper.



2. Fold your square, corner to corner, then unfold.



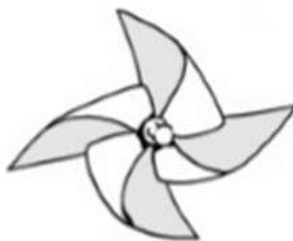
3. Make a pencil mark about 1/3 of the way from center.



4. Cut along fold lines. Stop at your pencil mark.



5. Bring every other point into the center and stick a pin through all four points.



6. Turn your pinwheel over - make sure the pin pokes through in the exact center.

7. Roll the pin around in little circles to enlarge the hole a little. This guarantees your pinwheel will spin freely

8. Stick the pin into a thin dowel.

Hint: Separate your pinwheel from the dowel with two or three beads.

Stick the pin through the beads first then - into the dowel.



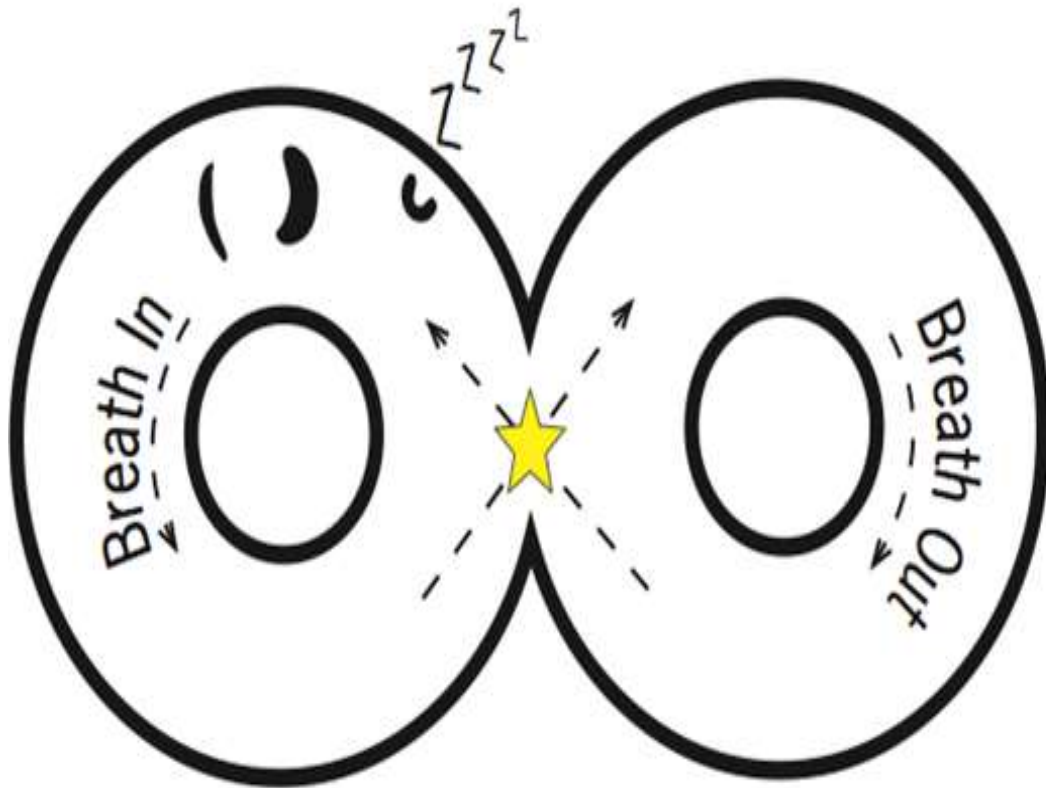
## How Does Your Engine Run?—Scenario Examples

Is your engine low? High? Just right? Where would you glue these pictures on the speedometer? Why?



## Lazy 8 Breathing—AKA Car Track

1. Trace the car track with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.
2. As you cross over to the other side of the car track, slowly let your breath out.
3. Continue breathing around the car track until you have a calm body and mind.



<https://www.google.ca/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewipl6bE3MLTAhUVzmMKHdviCZkQjRwIBw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F206039751682549873%2F&psig=AFQjCNHdnn6RfCRtQ1yM4JZPsK2AFL-7Q&ust=1493316748824463>

## Parent Invitation Example



An Invitation!!



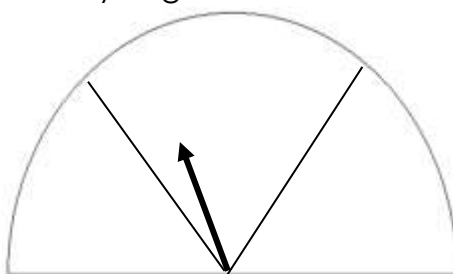
**Who:** You!! Mom, Dad, Aunt, Uncle, Grandpa or Grandma!!

**What:** An afternoon of FUN and learning!!

**When:** Friday May 16 from **1:00 – 2:29 p.m.** – please be on time

**Where:** Ron Brent - the library, the classroom and the meals room with your child!!

**Why:** Learning along with your child is **thrilling** but learning from your child is **INCREDIBLE!!** Come and learn about mindful breathing and "How Does My Engine Run?"



In the speedometer – label the three engine speeds and have children draw, print, or cut and paste examples to share with parents at home.

I **can/cannot** attend the afternoon of Mindfulness and How Does My Engine Run? on May 16.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adult's name

**Mark this next date on your calendar too – June 6 (afternoon)**

## Parent Reminder Examples

*Phone calls and playground visits may also be required to encourage parents to attend the parent/student afternoons.*



Dear \_\_\_\_\_

See you on Friday at 1:00 in our library!! We are excited you can come and join us for an afternoon of fun and learning!!



Love \_\_\_\_\_



Dear \_\_\_\_\_

We have not heard if you can join us on Friday afternoon for fun and learning.

### **Can you come? Yes or No?**

We would really like to see your smiling face at school.

Please return this note to school on Wednesday - thank you.

## Parent Thank You Examples



### *Our Engines Are Just Right!!*

Thank you for coming to celebrate my learning with me!! Friday was a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ afternoon! I can regulate my engine by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark your calendar with our next Friday afternoon date:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ at 1:00.

I will be bringing an invitation home soon!!

Love \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU PHOTOGRAPH** of the parent and the student learning, sharing and growing together. This THANK YOU card can be incorporated into a SEL, a writing, and an art lesson.

### **Our buckets are full!!**

Thank you for coming to celebrate my learning with me!! Friday was an incredible afternoon! I can fill buckets by:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark your calendar with our next Friday afternoon date:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ at 1:00.

I will be bringing an invitation home soon!!

Love \_\_\_\_\_



**Example “Parent” Invitation**

This is a copy of the email I sent out to invite “parents” and the invitation was attached

Hello all!!

Good Morning!! Happy Spring!

Attached is an invitation to our *Learning, Sharing, Growing—SEL Together* afternoons.

Please REPLY TO SENDER.

We are hoping that you will come and stand in for some parents who are not able to be with their 'student/child' on this day.

If there is someone you think would like to join our afternoons and you do not see their name on the list, please email me their name and I will invite them.

We look forward to seeing many of you at our afternoons. We understand that you are busy people, so no pressure!

Thank you in advance!



Mark your calendars!!

June 6 1:00 – 2:29 –MindUp, Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Day, Play



**We want you!! We need you!!**

**Teacher (grade1/2), Welcome (school counsellor) and Teacher (grade3/4), along with our students are inviting you to our third afternoon of SEL and Self-Regulation!!**

This is our final parent and child afternoon! As you know, Dr. Stuart Shanker said “parents need to be part of the process” and thus **Together We Learn and Grow** was envisioned!! **We want you** to come and learn along with our parents, be taught by our students and ENJOY!! **We need you** to be a ‘parent’ for a student whose family member cannot join us.

This session will begin at 1:00 in the school library with school counsellor teaching parents SEL and self-regulation language and general information. You will be greeted in the foyer by delightful staffers! Our guests will then move to classrooms and the afternoon will conclude in the meals room. This afternoon, there will be a story, breathing activities, a time to play, a song and a poem and a wee snack.

**Please confirm (or decline) your attendance to Jodee Sayle via email by Wednesday June 4 for our June afternoon. We require a FIRM commitment (or decline) so we can talk to our children about their “parent” and to ensure all of our children have a “parent”. If you have any questions, please call me at**



## Budget

When planning your afternoons, budgeting for all three of the afternoons at once allows you to apply for grants and donations. This preplanning also takes the unknown out of what you will and won't be able to do. A budget planning sheet is on the next page.

## Sources of money

### In your school district:

- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Administrator
- District initiatives that support inquiry
- District initiatives that support SEL
- Aboriginal Education Board
- Student Support Services

### Outside your school district:

- Imagine Grant  
<https://northernhealth.ca/YourHealth/HealthyLivingCommunities/ImagineGrants.aspx>
- Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network & Networks of Inquiry and Innovation [noii.ca/aesn/](http://noii.ca/aesn/)
- Healthy Schools BC & DASH BC [healthyschoolsbc.ca/news/3/grants-funding-opportunity/](http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/news/3/grants-funding-opportunity/)
- Raise a Reader Grant — check your local area for contact information
- Literacy Outreach — check your local area for contact information
- My Class Needs Foundation from Wintergreen  
<https://myclassneeds.ca/en/>
- Parents Reaching Out Grants  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/schools.html>
- Social and Emotional Learning Innovation Fund <http://education-first.com/social-emotional-learning-innovation-fund/>

## Budget Template

Term 1	Item	Price
	books	
	Art supplies	
	Mindful supplies	
	juice	
	food	
	Gift for babysitters	
		<b>Total:</b>
Term 2	Item	Price
	books	
	Art supplies	
	Mindful supplies	
	juice	
	food	
	Gift for babysitters	
		<b>Total:</b>
Term 3	Item	Price
	books	
	Art supplies	
	Mindful supplies	
	juice	
	food	
	Gift for babysitters	
		<b>Total:</b>
<b>Total for all afternoons</b>		<b>Total:</b>

## Parent Feedback Examples

### Example 1

Since our last session: Give a ✓

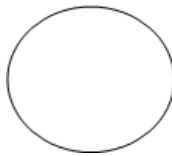
Read the book

Did deep breathing

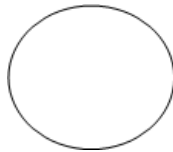


### Example 2

Today the parent felt



Today the student felt



Our favorite part was

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### Example 3

On large poster paper have parents and child  the face that represents their feelings for the session. A great opportunity to talk about the facial expressions.

Fabulous	Good	OK
		

Put a  on your favorite part of the afternoon

<b>Art project</b> 	<b>Mindful Activity</b> 	<b>Gathering time</b> 
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**For Notes**





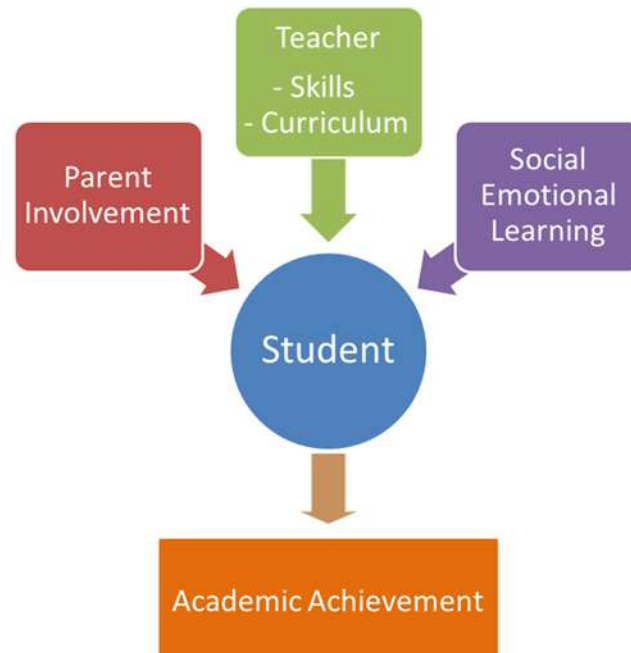
## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

My teaching journey has been an incredible one – the places, the students, the parents, and the colleagues I have met along the way. Since graduating from the University of British Columbia in 1988 with a degree in Special Education, I have taught in three different communities in northern British Columbia and have taught in a variety of roles. At the elementary level, I have been a resource teacher, learning assistance teacher, and teacher of English Language learners in kindergarten to Grade 7, and a classroom teacher in kindergarten to Grade 4. At the high school level, I have been a resource teacher, learning assistance teacher, and cooking and sewing teacher in Grade 8 to 12, and Calculus 11/12. At the district level I was the primary project facilitator supporting kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers in the curricular area of language arts. Now as a provincial teacher consultant, I teach pre-service teachers, pre-service educational assistants, and all educators in BC about supporting and teaching students with complex learning needs, specifically Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). While undertaking this Special Education Master's degree, I have had the opportunity to be reflective about my teaching career. Since 1988, on every daybook I had photocopied the Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher, quote, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart". It was this intangible environment that I wanted in my classroom, for my students. Social emotional learning (SEL) was where every year started and ended. From the onset of my Master's work, in all the papers I have written and in all the areas that drew my interest, the common thread was SEL and thus the purpose of my project was fitting: to create a manual for kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers in Prince George schools that

could assist classroom teachers in leading their students and their parents, together, on a purposeful and explicit journey into and through the importance SEL. Writing this manual, *Learning, Sharing Growing – SEL Together!* was the natural conclusion to not only this Master's program but also to a career that has focused on SEL for 29 years.

The central research question influencing my research was “To what degree will student success improve when kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers are provided with a manual of SEL information and procedures for implementing SEL parent afternoons?” By employing unobtrusive qualitative content analysis (QCA), an in-depth literature review of current and seminal research, I was able to identify three factors that could produce widespread positive change in school success for children in kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms (see Figure 6). The answer to my research question is answered with a solid foundation of research. The overwhelming result, as indicated in Chapter 2, reported that there is significant improvement in student school success when kindergarten to Grade 3 classroom teachers explicitly teach SEL skills and implement parent involvement in the classroom. *Learning, Sharing Growing – SEL Together!* is the manual that provides SEL information and procedures for implementing SEL parent afternoons.

The outcome of the QCA cemented the importance of supporting teachers in implementing SEL in their schools and classrooms and having parents learn from and alongside their children. *Learning, Sharing Growing – SEL Together!* is a researched-based manual that I can share with kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers to assist them in understanding the importance and significance of SEL. This manual has a variety of resources that a classroom teacher would require to initiate, plan, and implement



*Figure 6.* Crucial Triad demonstrates the influential role that parents, teachers, and SEL instruction have on a student and their academic achievement.

afternoons where parents and children are learning, sharing, and growing social emotional skills together. Additionally, this manual, especially Part 1, can be shared with elementary school administrators to increase and enhance their SEL knowledge and to foster their understanding of the impact SEL has on academic achievement. Furthermore, this manual, in its entirety can be used by any classroom teacher, Part 1 is inclusive SEL information, not grade or age specific. Parts 2 and 3 would need to be adjusted, an easy task, to fit the age and grade of the students.

Prior to beginning my literature review, I had three strong notions that drove my research. They were (1) the SEL programs to use would be set by me, (2) parents do not need to be involved in the SEL conversation, and (3) assessment is required. I found that these notions began to shift as I began to read, code, and analyze the articles. I liked that my entrenched beliefs were challenged and changed. Reading articles with a critical eye,

with a lens of checking facts and figures, and looking for commonalities did not only benefit this Master's, but also the daily work I do to support educators. The first notion to shift was: I would tell teachers what evidence-based SEL programs to use. With my years of experience and having success using certain programs I thought I knew best. What I discovered was SAFE (sequence, action, frequent and explicit). If a program the classroom teacher chooses applies SAFE, then he or she will have chosen a program that works for him or her and his or her students. The second shifting notion was parents were not necessary to the SEL conversation. Contrary to my thinking, the research reported that parent involvement in their child's education was essential for school success. Thus parental involvement became a key category in my coding frame. The third notion to shift was the assessment piece. I am a firm proponent of both formative and summative assessment. What I found was assessment of SEL skills did not appear in any of the initial articles I read and consequently this made me reconsider the importance of assessment in connection with *Learning, Sharing Growing – SEL Together!* However, SEL skills are assessed through the new BC curriculum, just not linked to these afternoons.

In my current role as a teacher consultant, I have the opportunity to share the knowledge I have garnered about SEL, SEL in schools, parental involvement, and teacher SEL knowledge and skills with educators throughout the province. Educators are receptive to this information as we embrace the redesigned BC curriculum. I created the SEL checklist, in Part 3 of the manual for my trauma counselling course in May 2016. I made this checklist into a brochure for the Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal alcohol

Spectrum Disorder (POPFASD). My two teacher partners and I have been sharing the brochure provincially for one year, which has been well received.

It is a feeling of celebration, elation, and accomplishment to have *Learning, Sharing Growing – SEL Together!* completed and written in a form that is easily produced and ready for use. In my teacher consultant role, I will have the opportunity to share my manual with kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers around the province as part of my workshops. My POPFASD teacher partners will be doing the same. The manual will be printed in black and white, the front page laminated, and spiral bound. In my own district, I will be giving a copy of the manual to all kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers in the five inner-city schools and to the teachers that I have mentored throughout the years.

I have always seen myself as a service leader. Creating this manual to share with my colleagues fits that vision. I am thrilled that I can share my SEL knowledge and my manual with kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers and that it is both relevant to their job and the redesigned BC curriculum. It is rewarding to know that teachers, the students, and the student's parents could benefit from my SEL journey.

The overall Master's experience taught me four lessons. First, you are never too old to go back to school, learning is not about age. My teaching experience was a benefit to the newer teachers and their enthusiasm and sense of inquiry was of value to me. We learned alongside each other to develop our knowledge and skills in the area of special education. Second, the platitude 'you don't know what you don't know', the fourth quadrant of the Johari window, is very true. I learned something new in every class I took. This new learning gave me opportunity to ponder my teaching practices and apply this knowledge to be a better educator for my students and my colleagues. Third, as a

researcher, I didn't have to follow a prescribed path – there was no curriculum, no school board directives and no colleague pressures – it was all about my strengths and interests. I was permitted to follow the research with no restrictions. At first this freedom was daunting and I kept searching for the linear, next step approach. I learned that research gives you the direction. I came to many forks in the road, made decisions that set my course, and I arrived at the final destination with a project that meets the needs of students and educators in BC. Fourth, the educational opportunities for my students and colleagues opened up when I began to query and dig deeper into areas that were of interest. I feel that I am better equipped to meet the changing and challenging needs of BC students and their teachers.

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