

Research Brief

What is the problem?

The primary aim of social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum is to encourage students to apply behaviours that are socially and emotionally competent.

After all, we want students to be caring and kind members of society.

Most SEL programs focus on teaching these behaviours to students however, knowing about socially and emotionally competent behaviours is not necessarily enough to ensure that students actually apply them in the real world.

What the study examined

The study examined two underlying drivers from the model: one self-belief and one motivation.

The study looked at whether the self-belief was associated with motivation and, in turn, the behavioural and wellbeing outcomes.

What were the main variables?

Variable	Definition	Sample Item
Perceived social competence	Students' self-belief that they can engage in social interactions constructively	I feel capable at resolving disagreements at school by being respectful to the other people involved
Autonomous prosocial Motivation	Students' motivation to be prosocial because they enjoy or personally value acting that way	I put effort into helping students who are hurt or upset at school...: - because I enjoy being kind - because I believe this is important to do
Prosocial behaviour	Actions that students undertake to benefit others. This variable was reported by parents.	My child is kind to younger

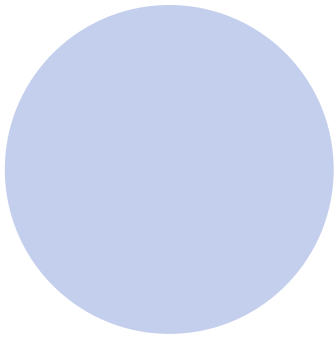
Perceived social competence appears to help students be more motivated to engage in prosocial behaviours and, in turn, actually engage in prosocial behaviour (as reported by parents).

Perceived social competence also appears to lay a foundation for greater emotional wellbeing.

Helping students to build a sense of competence related to social interaction is important.

There are documented strategies teachers can apply

About the Researcher



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Rebecca J. Collie, PhD, is a Scientia Associate Professor of Educational Psychology in the School of Education at the University of New South Wales, Australia. Rebecca conducts research in the broad areas of wellbeing, motivation, and social-emotional development using quantitative research methods. Previously, Rebecca worked as a primary school teacher in Melbourne. For further details, see:

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