

# INTRODUCTION

## One Author's Journey to Social-Emotional Learning

My journey striving to influence the social-emotional situations and skills of my students began with my teaching career in 1979 in a high-poverty district. Like so many other educators, I taught during the day, coached during the afternoon and attended classes for my master's degree in counseling in the evening. My counseling studies introduced me to many ideas about the social and emotional well-being of students. I was anxious to try out these concepts in my class.

My school did not have a counselor because it was a poor district, so I began to test some of my novice counseling in my classroom. Student fights that previously were met with punishments for both parties still met with consequences. However, when the punishment was completed, I started having "sit downs" with the combatants to mediate the disagreements. Since all the teachers in the school taught six periods a day, I had to be creative in finding time for these meetings either before school (when the buses arrived and school had not started), at lunchtime, or after school (before the buses pulled out or I had to run to practice for the team I was coaching). These meetings rarely lasted more than 10 or 15 minutes but still proved productive.

In my second year of teaching, I was joined by a colleague who had experience in counseling and social work before she began teaching. She helped me set up a rudimentary counseling session structure. I fumbled through those sessions using some group counseling skills that I learned in a graduate course on group counseling. In hindsight, I realize that I don't know if these meetings had any impact on classroom dynamics; however, they gave me tremendous insight into the way my students thought about themselves and their relationships with other students. These understandings caused me to shift

my classroom management from one of reacting to misbehavior to one of shaping positive behavior.

Fast forward eight years and I was now the vice-principal in a K-8 school with the highest parent education level and one of the highest parent income levels in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As vice-principal I was the school disciplinarian. I was fortunate to be in a school with a principal who valued students' social-emotional development. The school had a guidance counselor whom I respected and with whom I worked closely addressing students with behavior issues. In the role of vice-principal, I taught the first two periods of the day before assuming my administrative duties. These mixed positions gave me a special opportunity to work on student social-emotional development. I had a classroom laboratory to try out class meetings and other classroom practices as well as unscheduled time to work with the counselor and principal on the social-emotional climate school-wide.

Two years later (1988) I became a principal and had my own school. At a principals' meeting, the superintendent spoke about a new program that had been developed by Wellesley College called Open Circle. It was an innovative classroom meeting model designed to develop students' social and emotional competencies. As an eager new principal, I dove in with both feet, committing my faculty to a school-wide project. Two years later I realized that many of the teachers in my school didn't share my beliefs about the role of classrooms and/or classroom meetings in social-emotional development. I accepted full responsibility for this. I had an experienced and highly qualified staff whose results showed them to be highly effective (student test scores were among the best in the state). I immediately took the time to listen and understand their beliefs.

Looking back, I learned three lessons from this. First, you can't ask people to attend to students'

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social-emotional development if you don't attend to theirs. Second, many of the teachers who were not implementing the classroom meetings were more effective developing students' social-emotional growth than some who did run the meetings. These highly effective teachers used their multiple daily classroom management, group work interactions, and effective questioning to develop students' self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness. Third, I came to the realization that nearly all of the social and emotional behaviors students need to learn can be best developed through effective classroom management, group and partner work, and questioning.

The interaction of classroom behavior and the development of social-emotional skills have long been an interest of mine. In 2006, my co-authors and I wrote the first edition of the book *Instructional Practices That Maximize Student Achievement*. In the chapter on classroom management, we identified nine components of effective classroom management. Among those nine components are instructional, social development, and emotional development strategies teachers can use to be more proactive and less reactive in their classroom management. In the 2017 edition (Ribas, Brady, Tamerat, Deane, Greer, Billings), we delved more deeply into the social and emotional components of classroom management. In Chapter 5, we delved deeply into teachers' questioning practices. The social-emotional questioning strategies in this book build on that work. In Chapter 7 (on motivation), we looked at the academic, personal, and interpersonal effects of poverty on students. We examined the use of growth mindset and the nature of intelligence as it impacts all students.

Since the 2006 book had to address 10 areas of effective teaching, we were limited in our ability to focus on how teachers can modify these classroom practices to develop students' social-emotional skills. In this book, we explain how group work, partner work, classroom management, and questioning—the things every teacher does every minute of every day—can be used to effectively develop students' self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision making, relationship skills and social awareness without large commitments of time on the part of the teacher. —*Bill Ribas*

## Second Author's Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Journey

I was shy—painfully shy. I blushed a hot, embarrassed red each time I had to answer a question. I had always been conscientious, had done my work, wrote insightful essays and aced exams, but I never wanted to volunteer an answer. Throughout my years in classrooms, teachers had threatened to take points off if I didn't "speak up" in class. Rarely was there a class where I felt sufficiently safe and accepted to join in the discussions. I sometimes forced myself, with my heart beating and my face beet red, to raise my hand and participate. Although I was a voracious reader, and I loved learning and thinking and reflecting, the thought of public performance made each school day excruciatingly long and uncomfortable. Yet, somehow, I was academically successful.

My introversion, the need to think things out in my own time and my aversion to speaking spontaneously, were seen by most of my teachers as avoiding participation, a character flaw for most teachers. I became aware as I tried to fix my "uncooperative" self over the years that this perspective of my teachers was not necessarily appropriate. My shyness, now recognized as introversion, had life-long and serious consequences in my feeling successful at school. Class participation can be demonstrated in many ways beyond answering teachers' questions, including pair work, in which talking is less intimidating, conferences with the teacher, and using technology to record ideas such as podcasts. My "A" averages belied my feeling of public, social failure in school.

I began my practice teaching in English during the summer after I graduated from college, and despite my shyness, my love of words, encouraging mentors, and my belief in the power of education to elevate the lives of everyone somehow helped me get past my inhibitions and fears. I *loved* the dynamics of a classroom and surprisingly had found my place in the world. I brought to my classroom a recognition that success in education needs to be more than excellent grades. Good classrooms should be both academically challenging and emotionally safe, and I needed to understand that student behavior is not necessarily what I or conventional wisdom thought. I hadn't been resistant to learning; I had been shy.

At this point in my career, I needed to ask myself if a student that I saw as *distracted*, for example, was, in reality, just bored, unfocused, or recalcitrant. Or were

those behaviors triggered by other causes that I could not see? And what should I do about those behaviors?

One of my four children (all twins) had a teacher misperceive him. He had spent the summer reading *Island of the Blue Dolphins* and had been totally immersed in reading the book and seeing connections to his everyday 10-year-old life. He had taken notes with the excited anticipation of sharing once he was back to school. He took his book and notes with him everywhere in his back pocket. His notes were insightful, but looked a bit worse for wear.

Unfortunately, his new teacher felt that this lack of neatness represented carelessness, and she never saw his insight or enthusiasm for learning. In our first parent meeting, she told me of every messy or careless mistake he had made. I was at first shocked at how much she had missed, then I became incensed at her emphasis on compliance, neatness, and conformity. I decided at that moment, on my way to vent my frustration to the principal, that my life's work would be to make my classroom and others' classrooms safer for all students, including boys without perfect handwriting or shy and retiring girls as well as the miscreants often called "the frequent flyers." From then on, I attempted to school myself in the possible ways to make a classroom a positive place for learning for every student.

I began to realize that to achieve cultural sensitivity I needed to consider broader issues of our culture including poverty, race, religion, disability, and diversity. Beyond tolerance and patience, I needed to have a deeper appreciation and empathy for others. I also began to look at my own blind spots that caused me to misapprehend the appearance, words, or actions of students.

As an assistant superintendent, I have worked with teams of teachers and with The Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to implement social-emotional learning, have created "look fors" in walkthroughs with teachers to self-assess and support the implementation of positive behavior intervention systems, and adapted curricula for all students through Universal Design for Learning. In addition, I've worked with teachers and administrators to bring the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support with three tiers of support, both academic and social, to the schools. I've learned that the work takes time and that the emphasis must stay focused on creat-

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ing a positive environment for students to gain these social and academic skills. I realized that this kind of shift in school and classroom culture requires an ongoing effort and sometimes major changes in perspectives and mindsets of teachers, administrators, and students.

In the end, I've seen many positive results: Third and fifth graders were taught through sentence starters to have appropriate academic dialogues providing credit to others' ideas with phrases such as "Building on John's ideas...", and their social awareness expanded; some students spontaneously invited the more reserved students to join in. These elementary

students then carried their new skills and their social awareness forward to new classes and to the next year of school. Other examples include an assistant principal who is encouraging moments of mindfulness, and teachers who, for instance, invite students to breathe deeply in the two minutes before announcements every day and others who have become attuned to the emotional atmosphere of their classrooms.

Thus, I come to this book with a major focus on developing a community and an accepting culture for learning together within each classroom. A safe classroom needs to be orderly and calm and focused on high academic expectations. At the same time, it requires that students are seen with empathy and understanding and that both their academic and social-emotional growth is supported by socially and culturally aware educators.

I taught English, then reading, then became a director of a college writing and learning center, then a K-12 director of curriculum and, finally, in my last 17 years, I was an assistant superintendent during which time I spent as much time as I could in classrooms, the real front lines for education. The districts ranged from schools with low socio-economic demographics, to suburban, to large multi-town rural districts where I encountered the devastating forces of poverty on students' lives.

As part of the research for this book, we interviewed teachers, administrators, social workers, and school psychologists for their insight into the needs of teachers and students. The myriad concerns they address daily are at times overwhelming to hear. Their suggestions, including mindfulness and strength-based beliefs, which emphasize what a student can do instead of the so-called deficit model that focuses on remediating weaknesses, have been incorporated



into this book. Until recently, these skills were called “soft skills” and educational research had not yet documented that these skills were essential for academic success. This book provides pragmatic support for teachers in every class every day. I see SEL as an organic part of teaching and learning. —*Deb Brady*

## Why This Book Was Written

This book provides educators with an easy-to-use guide for developing social-emotional learning in themselves and their students without the need for multiple hours of training and/or time-consuming wholesale changes to the way they teach. The authors of this book each have over 30 years of experience as paraprofessionals, teachers, and administrators. We have collectively worked in more than 100 school districts as trainers and consultants.

All educators are experiencing initiative fatigue. Initiative fatigue is an overabundance of initiatives they are being asked to implement simultaneously. In this book, we designed a program that enables educators to fully develop their students’ social-emotional learning within the context of the work they already do every day. The book contains multiple strategies that can be implemented with minimal commitment of educator time. It shows teachers how they can adjust and/or tweak the student interactions they already have multiple times each day and how that results in a significant development of social-emotional learning skills.

## What Is Social-Emotional Learning?

The social-emotional learning (SEL) movement is a thoughtfully created structure for organizing what good teachers and good schools have done for decades. It is a structure for organizing the development of affective (intrapersonal and interpersonal) learning.

SEL began as a movement in the 1960s when educators began to recognize that social and emotional skills made a significant difference in improving both behavior and achievement in inner-city schools. Most of the components of what we now call social-emotional learning have been with us for decades. By the ’70s, educators were talking about the “affective domain” of teaching and learning, which were at that time the responsibility of guidance counselors. Classroom teachers, on the other hand, were responsible for the

## Objectives for the Book

After reading this book, the reader will be able to

- a. make social-emotional learning an integral part of every interaction with students by managing academic, personal, and interpersonal activities in a way that develops self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision making, relationship, and social awareness skills.
- b. develop teacher and student self-awareness about their beliefs related to student and teacher behavior and use growth mindset strategies to make positive modifications to educator and student belief systems.
- c. use teacher questions, student reflections, and metacognition to support the development of students’ social-emotional skills in the five areas of social-emotional learning.
- d. incorporate effective practices in whole class and group work to support the development of students’ social-emotional skills.
- e. use the nine components of effective classroom management to support the development of social-emotional learning skills.
- f. develop and manage classroom rules, routines, and expectations to maximize the level of respectful, accountable talk, and on-task behavior.
- g. create classroom communities that are safe for all students and conducive for learning.
- h. obtain, maintain, and engage students’ attention throughout the lesson.
- i. develop educator-to-student and student-to-student relationships that proactively increase appropriate student personal and interpersonal awareness and behavior.
- j. set up a classroom structure which, by providing routines and mode maintains, appropriate student behavior and supports and enhances a student’s personal and interpersonal awareness and behavior.
- k. create a system of rewards, consequences, and learning experiences based upon SEL theories for reinforcing respectful, on-task behavior, and the development of students’ social-emotional skills.
- l. use SEL best practices to respond to difficult-to-manage behaviors and develop an individual contingency plan to support the growth of a student whose inappropriate behavior hampers learning.

cognitive domain, and physical education and health teachers were responsible for the psychomotor domains.

The 1970s decade was also a time of great experimentation in the use of counseling in schools by teachers in classrooms. William Glasser and others created schools for students identified as having “behavior issues” by training teachers to use counseling skills to supplement the counseling sessions conducted by mental health professionals. In addition, the work in high-poverty schools resulted in improved behaviors as well as improved academic success. The Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning eventually coalesced these ideas into the SEL movement based on the positive impact of these “soft” skills. Based on a meta-analysis of over two hundred SEL programs, the academic performance of students improved 11 percent (Durlak et al., 2011). Although these programs varied widely, Durlak et al. discovered the following:

- A safe, caring, classroom climate improves students’ SEL skills.
- Student participation in collaborative and group learning situations increases student achievement and student engagement if students have adequate SEL skills to work with others.
- High-risk behaviors decrease when students are working with peers and teachers trained in pro-social skills and their attitude toward school becomes more positive.

Thus, classrooms that provide emotional safety,

*Classrooms that provide emotional safety, respectful relationships, and worthy tasks support SEL growth and academic achievement.*

respectful relationships between peers and teachers, and worthy tasks with high expectations support both SEL growth and academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011).

CASEL has done for interpersonal and intrapersonal learning what the professional learning communities structure did for teacher-directed professional development.

The five major areas of social-emotional learning, illustrated in Figure 1, include (Casel, 2016):

### Self-Awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitation with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

Table 1 lists specific self-awareness behaviors in the left column. The right column lists the activities provided in this book for supporting those behaviors.

### Self-Management

The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations—effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals. Table 2 lists specific self-management behaviors in the left column, and the

**Table 1 Self-Awareness Connected to Classroom Practices**

Self-Awareness Behaviors	Classroom Practices Described in This Book That Support Self-Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying emotions</li> <li>• Accurate self-perception</li> <li>• Recognizing strengths</li> <li>• Self-confidence</li> <li>• Self-efficacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal setting</li> <li>• Reflecting/Journaling</li> <li>• Classroom meeting/advisory</li> <li>• Accountable talk</li> <li>• Socratic seminars</li> <li>• Group work and partner work</li> <li>• Metacognition</li> </ul>

**Table 2 Self-Management Connected to Classroom Practices**

Self-Management Behaviors	Classroom Practices Described in This Book That Support Self-Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impulse control</li> <li>• Stress management</li> <li>• Self-discipline</li> <li>• Self-motivation</li> <li>• Goal setting</li> <li>• Organizational skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal setting</li> <li>• Self-assessment</li> <li>• Restorative justice discussions</li> <li>• Conflict resolution facilitation</li> <li>• Maintaining attention</li> <li>• Inhibiting inappropriate impulses</li> </ul>

activities provided in this book for supporting those behaviors are listed on the right.

## Social Awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports. Table 3 lists specific social awareness behaviors in the left column, and the activities provided in this book for supporting those behaviors are listed on the right.

## Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well,

cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help. Table 4 lists specific relationship-management behaviors in the left column, and the activities provided in this book for supporting those behaviors are listed on the right.

## Responsible Decision-Making

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others. Table 5 lists specific responsible decision-making behaviors in the left column, and the activities provided in this book for supporting those behaviors are listed on the right.

**Table 3 Social Awareness Connected to Classroom Practices**

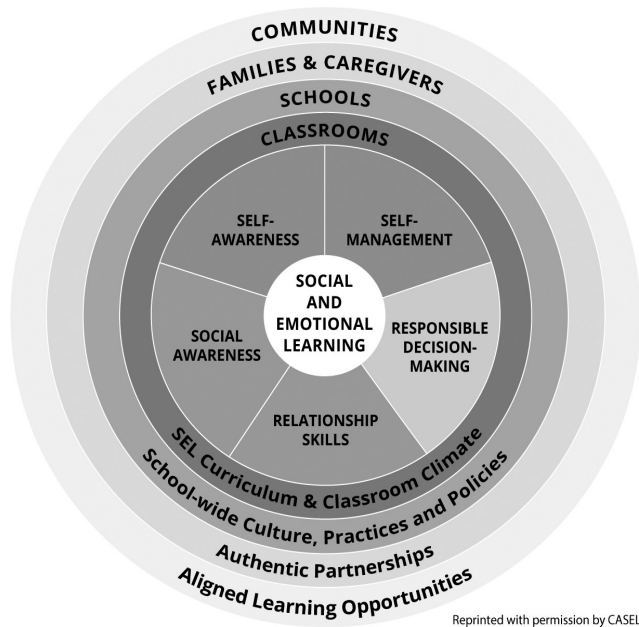
Social Awareness Behaviors	Classroom Practices Described in This Book That Support Social Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Perspective-taking</li> <li>● Empathy</li> <li>● Appreciating diversity</li> <li>● Respect for others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Service learning</li> <li>● Conflict resolution facilitation</li> <li>● Role playing</li> <li>● Accountable talk</li> <li>● Socratic seminars</li> <li>● Group work / Pair work</li> </ul>

**Table 4 Relationship Skills Connected to Classroom Practices**

Relationship Skills Behaviors	Classroom Practices Described in This Book That Support Relationship Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communication</li> <li>● Social engagement</li> <li>● Relationship-building</li> <li>● Teamwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classroom meeting/advisory</li> <li>● Questioning</li> <li>● Service learning</li> <li>● Conflict resolution facilitation</li> <li>● Role playing</li> <li>● Accountable talk</li> <li>● Socratic seminars</li> <li>● Group work / Pair work</li> </ul>

**Table 5 Responsible Decision Making Connected to Classroom Practice**

Responsible Decision-Making Behaviors	Classroom Practices Described in This Book That Support Responsible Decision Making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identifying problems</li> <li>● Analyzing situations</li> <li>● Solving problems</li> <li>● Evaluating</li> <li>● Reflecting</li> <li>● Ethical responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classroom meeting/advisory</li> <li>● Debating an issue</li> <li>● Problem solving with case studies</li> <li>● Socratic seminars, inner and outer circle</li> <li>● Steps to a procedure as individual and as part of group</li> <li>● Conflict resolution facilitation</li> <li>● Accountable talk</li> </ul>



**Figure 1**  
**Social and Emotional Learning Graphic**

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## The Need for SEL in Schools

The results for SEL are clear: Social and emotional processes have a significant positive effect on learning and on students' behavior and relationships to their peers, their teachers, and their school. Each SEL skill listed above supports the development of self-regulation behaviors, perseverance, and motivation, all of which are linked to academic achievement (Aranson, 2002; cited in Durlak et al., 2011; Duckworth and Seligman, 2005; Elliot and Dweck, 2005; cited in Durlak et al., 2011, Zins and Elias, 2006; cited in Durlak et al., 2011).

Just as clear is the converse: **If SEL is lacking and if relationships in the classroom are conflicted, the classroom environment can result in disengaged students and decreased academic achievement.** Students in conflict-filled classrooms are more likely to have low achievement and to be disengaged from school (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta, and Howes, 2002; Hamre and Pianta, 2001; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2003; Raver et al., 2008). Further, only 60 percent of students in middle school and high school feel that their schools are caring or encouraging, and less than 50 percent of these students feel that they have SEL skills for making decisions, resolving conflicts, or feeling empathy for others (Benson, 2006; cited in Durlak et al., 2011).

## The First Step for Teachers: Determine Your SEL Competency

A teacher's social-emotional competencies (SEC) are at least as important as pedagogy and content knowledge for success in teaching and learning. Teachers' SEL competencies influence the qualities of the relationships established in the classroom, serve as models to students, and are major contributors to the classroom climate. According to Mashburn et al., "When students have high-quality relationships with teachers, they have better social adjustment and higher academic competence" (Mashburn et al., 2008; Raver, Garner, and Smith-Donald, 2007; Pianta, 2003).

Researchers suggest that "awareness, attention, flexibility, and intentionality" are essential dispositions for teachers (R.W. Roeser and colleagues, 2012). In addition, **teachers need to develop calm, organized, and safe classes with carefully created classroom management routines and norms that provide positive climates for students' learning.** The relationship between a teacher and a student was found to be a greater factor in student success than the teacher-student ratio and teacher education (Mashburn et al., 2008).

Everyday occasions for teachers to make use of their social-emotional competencies include the following:

- **Emotional Skills:** showing empathy, cultural awareness, appreciation
- **Social/Interpersonal:** modeling coping skills and appropriate responses to anger, anxiety, or sensitivity
- **Cognitive Regulation:** changing a lesson when it's not working, avoiding anger or sarcasm when it is aimed at the teacher, adjusting the work based on the needs of the class (Jones et al., p. 67)

A teacher's SEL competencies may help her deal with typical everyday stresses and the emotional weight of working with students who have experienced trauma. Stress has a negative impact on the behavior of both students and teachers. With stress, classrooms and schools often become harsher, colder, and more conflicted.

Teachers with positive SEC are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes and experience higher job satisfaction (Brackett et al., 2010). For their own emotional health and to prevent professional burn-out, teachers profit from the SEL tools that support



students and address how to cope with the stressors, how to foster positive relationships with students, mindfulness focusing, centering techniques such as deep breathing, yoga, or meditation (Jones, et al., p. 68). Brain research recognizes that stress disrupts thinking, including “attention, memory, and problem solving” (Jones, et al., p. 67).

## Cultural Awareness

As SEL programs have evolved, research has recognized that feeling safe and accepted in the classroom makes a profound and positive difference. Researchers have found that “having friends from several different social groups that integrate gender and race increases students’ sense of connection” (Zakrzewski, 2016). Specific activities that respond to cultural differences can address the impact of harmful words (questioning) and are provided in this book, as well as activities that encourage students to find their shared humanity (classroom meetings/advisories) or that bring out students’ kindness and empathy (accountable talk, service learning). In addition, every one of these exercises can be used as part of any academic unit from literature to world languages to history to the social sciences as much as they could be used on their own in a classroom meeting organized to discuss interpersonal problem solving.

These social and emotional competencies are not necessarily natural to all teachers, but they can be learned and embedded into the daily life of the school for everyone—students, teachers, staff, and administrators. This book is focused on providing teachers with practical, everyday practices that support the development of SEL skills for students and provide a safe, orderly classroom.

### Fact 1: Classroom behavior problems cause loss of time for teaching and learning.

As Walker, Ramsey, and Gresham (2004) note in their article, a survey of teachers who are members of the American Federation of Teachers indicates the following:

Seventeen percent (of teachers) said they lost four or more hours of teaching time per week, thanks to disruptive student behavior; another 19 percent said they lost two or three hours. In urban areas, fully 21 percent said they lost four or more hours per week. And in urban secondary schools, the

percentage (who report losing four or more hours of instruction) is 24 percent.

For the typical teacher who has between 20 and 30 hours a week of contact with students, this is a significant loss of instructional time over the course of the year. Even if we take the lowest figure (two hours) and multiply that by 38 weeks in a school year, we see a loss of 76 hours of instructional time. That is equal to more than three weeks of school!

Teachers have long been aware that effective and engaging instruction is an excellent means of avoiding classroom management issues; however, we also know that even the most engaging teacher will have classroom management issues unless he or she has an effective plan for managing students’ personal and interpersonal interactions.

### Fact 2: Managing student behavior is one of the more difficult skills to teach teachers because it is so situational in nature.

Landrum, Lingo, and Scott (2011), as well as Alderman and Greene (2011), assert the importance of being proactive in classroom management rather than reactive. Predicting and solving problems before they occur is far more productive than addressing behaviors in the moment. Additionally, there are many variables and social structures (factors) that must be considered when developing a classroom management plan. In this book, we look at the variables and social structures that teachers must consider when managing student behavior. We then look at specific steps to take when establishing an effective plan. Later in the book,

we look at what we do with individual students who still disrupt even when we have a well-constructed and consistently implemented classroom management plan.

### Fact 3: Brain development related to nutrition and other factors in homes in poverty may contribute to lower engagement.

A longitudinal study analyzing MRI scans of 389 typically developing children and adolescents at six US research sites found that children from poor families showed systematic structural differences in brain development, specifically in the hippocampus and in the frontal and temporal lobes. In contrast, there were no statistically significant differences in the brain regions

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between children of near-poor families and those from higher socioeconomic-status groups.

**Fact 4: Poor SEL skills often result in academic failure.**

In “Promoting Student Resilience in School Contexts” (2007), Gale Morrison and Megan Redding Allen tell us, “If students have poor social skills, a lack of friends, and have poor relationships with teachers, they are at serious risk of failure” (p. 163).

*If students have poor social skills, a lack of friends, and have poor relationships with teachers, they are at serious risk of failure.*

**Fact 5: SEL has a positive impact on behavior and achievement in K-12 children.**

“A major review of 213 experimental-control group studies of K-12 students who participated in SEL programs demonstrated positive results” (Weissberg and Cascarino, p. 11).

- Improved social and emotional skills, self-concept, bonding to school, and classroom behavior;
- Few conduct problems such as disruptive classroom behavior, aggression, bullying, and delinquent acts; and
- Reduced emotional distress such as depression, stress, or social withdrawal.

## Integrating These Skills Into the Classroom

This book focuses on the classroom and how SEL can contribute to everyday learning. It also provides practical examples based on research into the ways in which SEL supports classroom culture and students’ growth socially, emotionally, and academically.

## The Nine Social, Emotional, and Academic Components of Managing Classroom Behavior

Over the past 20 years, the co-authors of other books and other trainers with whom we work have used the classroom management, motivation, and growth mindset sections of those books to train thousands of teachers in effective behavior management within the context of academic teaching. The unique program described in this book has been used with pre-

school, elementary, middle school, and high school teachers as well as with undergraduate and graduate college students. The key reason for the success of this program is that it explains all nine factors that

must be addressed to create a positive educational environment using effective behavior management and classroom-proven methods that lead to high levels of student academic and social-emotional development. It is a systematic approach to creating classrooms that are orderly, build a sense of community, and support the development of children’s control of their personal and interpersonal behavior and their involvement in learning.

One of the skills we look at closely is a teacher’s questioning practices (see Table 6). Questioning is the most frequently used instructional strategy. However, its impact is often underutilized. In our book, *Instructional Practices That Maximize Student Achievement*, we looked at all questioning practices. In this book, we zero in on questioning practices as they can be used to develop social-emotional learning.

Throughout each chapter, samples of questions are provided to support students’ social-emotional learning. Each chapter’s content and the SEL skills it addresses are listed below.

**Chapter 1** describes educator and student beliefs about the nature of intelligence as it relates to academic, social, and emotional success and their connection to classroom climate, and teacher and student behavior.

**Chapter 2** describes educator-to-student and student-to-student relationships as key components in building a community of learners in the classroom.

**Chapter 3** discusses the importance of arranging classroom space and of the teacher’s use of proximity to students to optimize students’ social interactions, personal feelings, and incidences of positive behavior.

**Chapter 4** provides descriptions of how to directly teach and model rules, routines, and expectations that provide students and teachers with opportunities to develop social and emotional skills and understanding as a whole class and in partner and small group work.

**Chapter 5** details strategies for obtaining, maintaining, and regaining attention and that build students’ self-image, student engagement, and academic success.

**Table 6 Academic Purposes of Questions and SEL Connections**

Purpose of Questioning	Social-Emotional Connections
Assess learning to inform instruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-awareness</li> <li>2. Student self-assessment skills and metacognition</li> <li>3. Quality teacher feedback</li> <li>4. Quality positive responses and appropriate praise</li> <li>5. Respectful, encouraging relationships</li> </ol>
Deepen student understanding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop higher-order thinking</li> <li>2. Embed learning</li> <li>3. Develop social and personal awareness</li> <li>4. Develop decision-making and relationships skills</li> </ol>
Engage students and maintain their attention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop self-management</li> <li>2. Engage students in the content</li> <li>3. Social awareness</li> <li>4. Respect for others</li> <li>5. Relation management</li> <li>6. Social engagement</li> <li>7. Teamwork</li> <li>8. Develop decision-making skills</li> </ol>
Activate previous learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connect students to their learning</li> <li>2. Connect to students' experiences</li> <li>3. Uncover academic and social misconceptions</li> <li>4. Generate student involvement and interest</li> </ol>

Based on the work in Ribas, Brady, Tamerat, Deane, Greer, and Billings

**Chapter 6** provides examples of student self-assessment of personal and interpersonal behavior that lead students to metacognition and reflection.

**Chapter 7** details a system of rewards and consequences that maintain positive student actions and interactions while building self-esteem.

**Chapter 8** provides techniques for teaching that engage students at all academic, social, and emotional levels of development.

**Chapter 9** gives the reader methods for maintaining a classroom environment that develops and nurtures social-emotional learning.

To achieve effective classroom management and social-emotional learning, all nine techniques described in the chapters above must be evident in a classroom.

**Chapter 10** discusses the use of classroom meetings/ advisories in the development of social-emotional learning.