



The Role Of Social And Emotional Learning (Sel) In Growing The Social And Emotional Skills Of Primary School Students

Jelita Dwi Septya*

*Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan
jelitadwiseptya0609@gmail.com

Zaini Dahlan**

**Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan
zainidahlan@uinsu.ac.id

Submitted: 2024-04-28

Revised: 2024-06-09

Accepted: 2024-06-10

ABSTRACT

Good mastery of various skills allows individuals to achieve success in life. This also applies to elementary school-age children. One of the skills that are considered important to master is social and emotional skills. From the results of simple interviews and observations that have been conducted in pre-research at SD Prestige Bilingual School, this school implements the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Program as an effort to overcome various social and emotional problems felt by students. From the findings of simple interviews and observations that have been carried out in pre-research, this research was conducted to find out and describe the implementation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in fostering students' social and emotional skills, especially in the implementation of learning. This type of research is qualitative research. The methods used are observation, interview, and document study. This research is located at SD Prestige Bilingual School. From the results of this study it can be concluded that grade 2 students of SD Prestige Bilingual School have good social and emotional skills, although there are still some students who are considered to have to hone their social and emotional skills again. The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program has an important role in fostering the social and emotional skills of grade 2 students of Prestige Bilingual School through a series of activities such as SEL learning, classroom goals, meet up, buddy up, community buiders, and SEL week.

Keywords: *The role of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), students' social and emotional skills*

ABSTRAK

Penguasaan terhadap berbagai keterampilan dengan baik menjadikan individu dapat memperoleh keberhasilan dalam kehidupannya. Hal ini berlaku juga pada anak usia sekolah dasar. Salah satu keterampilan yang dinilai penting untuk dikuasai adalah keterampilan sosial dan emosional. Dari hasil wawancara sederhana dan observasi yang telah dilakukan pada pra-penelitian di SD Prestige Bilingual School, sekolah ini melaksanakan Program *Social and Emotional Learning* (SEL) sebagai upaya menanggulangi berbagai permasalahan sosial dan emosional yang dirasakan siswa. Dari temuan-temuan hasil wawancara sederhana serta observasi yang telah dilakukan pada pra-penelitian, maka penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui serta mendeskripsikan pelaksanaan *Social and Emotional Learning* (SEL) dalam menumbuhkan keterampilan sosial dan emosional siswa khususnya pada pelaksanaan pembelajaran. Jenis penelitian ini berupa penelitian kualitatif. Metode yang digunakan adalah observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumen. Penelitian ini berlokasi di SD Prestige Bilingual School. Dari hasil penelitian ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa kelas 2 SD Prestige Bilingual School

telah memiliki keterampilan sosial dan emosional yang baik, meskipun masih terdapat beberapa siswa yang dinilai harus mengasah lagi kemampuan sosial dan emosionalnya. Program *Social and Emotional Learning* (SEL) memiliki peran penting dalam menumbuhkan keterampilan sosial dan emosional siswa kelas 2 SD Prestige Bilingual School melalui rangkaian kegiatan yang dilaksanakan seperti, pembelajaran SEL, *classroom goals*, *meet up*, *buddy up*, *community builders*, dan *SEL week*.

Kata Kunci: *Peran Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Keterampilan sosial dan emosional siswa*

INTRODUCTION

In this era of fast-paced globalization, education does not only focus on developing students' academic abilities, but is also important to shape their character and social and emotional skills. Holistic education includes the development of social and emotional skills as an integral part of the elementary school curriculum. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a systematic approach to educating students to have the social and emotional skills needed to be successful in everyday life.

Good mastery of various skills enables individuals to achieve success in their lives. This also applies to elementary school age children. At this time, children are at an important developmental stage where they not only need to master academic skills, but also social and emotional skills. These skills help them interact well with peers, manage emotions, and make wise decisions. Therefore, it is important for elementary schools to provide a comprehensive education that includes the development of social and emotional skills, in addition to a focus on academic achievement.

Proficiency in various skills enables individuals to achieve success in their lives. This principle applies to elementary school children as well. One crucial skill deemed essential for them to master is social and emotional skills. These skills serve as the primary foundation for children's development, enabling them to interact more effectively within their environment. (Ilham, 2020). Social skills encompass the actions, behaviors, and attitudes exhibited by an individual when interacting with others, including attentiveness and timeliness to make others feel comfortable. Social skills can also be defined as a person's ability to interact with others and engage in behaviors that are acceptable within the environment. (P. E. S. Nasution & Siregar, 2023; Yusnaldi, 2017). Social skills are commonly characterized as abilities that enable students to respond to specific social demands in acceptable ways. (Dewanti et al., 2016). Developing social skills is crucial as it enables individuals to engage in adaptive interactions within their social environment and to receive both positive and negative feedback from different individuals (Lina Riyani & Ima Mulyawati, 2023; Ulum, 2019).

According to Marzurik, social skills in school help students interact and collaborate with peers and teachers. (Mahabbati et al., 2017). Furthermore, social skills in school enhance students' problem-solving abilities and their empathy towards others. (Ramadhan, 2018). Social skills in school play a role in maintaining social relationships with teachers and peers, as well as being able to adapt to the demands of activities and learning (Nadia et al., 2022). Thus, social skills play a crucial role in emotionally and behaviorally preparing children for school.

Specifically regarding students' social skills in school, according to Walker and McConnell, there are three categories of behaviors that serve as supportive indicators of learning activities. First, Teacher-Preferred Social Behavior encompasses basic social behaviors that support social interaction, including communication, empathy and sympathy, cooperation and compromise, and problem-solving behaviors such as responding to disruptions or issues and overcoming the urge to act aggressively. Second, Peer-Preferred Social Behavior relates to peer interactions involving acceptance, mutual assistance, adaptability, and initiative. Third, School Adjustment Behavior refers to behaviors that demonstrate adaptation to learning activities, such as time management skills, following instructional guidelines, creative skills, and coping with learning (Mahabbati et al., 2017).

This school implements the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Program as an effort to overcome various social and emotional problems felt by students. These problems include difficulties in interacting with peers, managing stress, and dealing with academic and social pressure in the school environment. Some students show signs of a lack of skills in effective communication, empathy, and responsible decision making. This can negatively impact their overall well-being and academic performance. Therefore, SEL programs are implemented with the aim of developing students' abilities to manage emotions, improve social relationships, and create a more positive and supportive learning environment.

In addition to social skills, there are also emotional skills that are considered important for the effectiveness of the learning process. Emotional skills in elementary school children refer to their ability to understand, manage, and express their emotions in a healthy and constructive manner. These skills help children develop positive relationships, solve problems effectively, and succeed in school and life (Arlina & Dewi, 2019). Children's emotional skills are part of emotional intelligence, which includes positive potentials such as empathy, expressing and understanding feelings, controlling anger, independence, friendliness, solidarity, respect for others, as well as the ability to adapt and solve problems (Daulay, 2015). Emotional skills in understanding and managing emotions have a significant impact on three critical reflection aspects: the ability to analyze problems, the ability to understand cause-and-effect relationships, and the ability to plan actions (Bucich & MacCann, 2019). Furthermore, emotional skills also influence processes related to group learning, such as identifying team members, social engagement, communication, and conflict management (Abudrrahman et al., 2021; Fenanlampir & Mutohir, 2021).

Based on the opinions of the experts above, children's emotional skills include: their ability to understand, manage, and express emotions or feelings in various situations and conditions; empathy towards others; confidence and responsibility in expressing opinions; the ability to understand and explain issues they are facing; and the ability to comprehend the cause-and-effect relationships of their actions.

Recognizing the importance of social-emotional skills in children, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), an organization focused on social-emotional learning for elementary and middle school students, has developed the core competencies of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). CASEL explains that SEL comprises five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social skills,

relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Through simple interviews and observations conducted during pre-research at Prestige Bilingual School in Medan City, it was found that the school implements a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Program to address various social and emotional issues experienced by students. This program is considered to provide an opportunity for teachers to impart understanding to students regarding the social and emotional aspects they should possess, thereby helping teachers foster students' social and emotional skills. Through SEL, students are taught five core competencies related to social and emotional skills. These core competencies have been used as references by various countries implementing SEL in schools. CASEL has also collaborated with many schools in America and various parts of the world (Adiba, 2020).

SEL is closely related to character education instilled in schools. Character education is crucial to be instilled as early as possible (Asih & Aufa, 2023; Wandini, 2017). SEL is a learning process that helps students develop self-awareness, manage emotions, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Similarly to character education, which aims to instill moral values and ethics in students, thus shaping them into responsible, moral, and virtuous individuals (Alga et al., 2023; Usiono et al., 2020). The relationship between them can be seen in the skills taught in SEL becoming an important foundation in character development. SEL and character education share the same goal of helping students develop into well-rounded and happy individuals, and they can mutually reinforce efforts in developing the social and emotional skills needed by students (Mega Tiara Irfani et al., 2023; Sifa et al., 2022).

Two studies discussing a similar topic related to social-emotional learning were found. Fitrahullah, in his research on social-emotional competence applied in English language subjects, concluded that teachers' ability to understand syntactic concepts and apply them in teaching makes learning feel more comfortable and the material easier for students to comprehend. (Fitratullah, 2023). Meanwhile, Helaluddin and Alamsyah, in their research containing a conceptual study on SEL in language learning, concluded that various skills are expected to develop through the implementation of SEL in language learning (Helaluddin & Alamsyah, 2019).

Research on "The Role of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in Developing the Social and Emotional Skills of Elementary School Students" has an urgency that is very relevant to the educational challenges faced today and in the future. Amidst the dynamics of modern education, social and emotional skills are increasingly recognized as key components in a student's overall development. Schools are not only responsible for imparting academic knowledge to students, but also for preparing them thoroughly to face the complexities of everyday life. In an era of social interaction that is increasingly influenced by technology, the importance of social and emotional skills is becoming increasingly apparent. This research can provide an in-depth understanding of how developing social and emotional skills through SEL can help overcome these challenges. Thus, this research has great potential to provide valuable insights for current and future education, by strengthening our understanding of the role of SEL in creating students who are not only academically intelligent, but also emotionally and socially resilient.

METHODS

Type and Design

This type of research is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research focuses on the natural environment as a source of data and the events that occur within a social situation are its main focus of study (Halim & Haidir, 2019). This type of research emphasizes the meaning of its findings rather than generalization. The approach used in this method is the observational case study approach. In observational case studies, the most important primary data collection technique is participatory observation results accompanied by formal and informal interviews, as well as document observations (A. F. Nasution, 2023).

Data collection technique

This research uses triangulation data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews and document study (Abdussamad, 2021). This approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Program at SD Prestige Bilingual School and its impact on the growth of students' social and emotional skills. Through direct observations in classrooms and school activities, researchers can directly observe student interactions and the implementation of SEL programs in real contexts. Interviews with teachers, school staff, and possibly parents provide additional insight into their perceptions and experiences related to SEL programs. Study of documents, such as SEL learning materials, lesson plans, and previous evaluation reports, can provide important additional data for a deeper analysis and understanding of SEL implementation in the school. With the combination of these three methods, research can produce a comprehensive and verified understanding of the role of SEL in the development of elementary school students' social and emotional skills.

Data analysis

The data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman interactive model which involves three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. First, data reduction means simplifying and organizing data collected from observations, interviews, and document analysis into manageable parts. Next, data display involves presenting summarized data visually through charts, tables, or diagrams to better understand patterns or trends. Finally, inference/verification involves interpreting data to draw meaningful conclusions and ensuring their accuracy by comparing them with original data.

By using this method, research can systematically analyze how Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is implemented to improve the social and emotional skills of elementary school students. This approach helps in understanding the findings clearly and drawing reliable conclusions for further exploration or practical application.. (Sugiyono, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on observation, interviews, and document analysis, it was found that Grade 2 students at Prestige Bilingual School already possess good social and emotional skills,

although some students are perceived to need further improvement in their social and emotional abilities. Students' social skills can be observed in various aspects, as follows. (1) Establishing good relationships with peers, as evidenced by students' ability to cooperate in group tasks and those who understand the lessons better help explain them more simply to classmates who are having difficulty. Additionally, classmates are not hesitant to advise each other when one of them behaves inappropriately. (2) Establishing good relationships with teachers, as reflected in students' respectful demeanor and speech when communicating with teachers. (3) Being able to adapt during learning activities, evident when students understand and execute learning activities according to given instructions, and are able to complete assignments on time.

Additionally, students' emotional skills are also evaluated positively. Findings related to students' emotional skills at school are as follows. (1) Students are able to express their emotions and understand how to manage them. For instance, when students feel sad or angry, they take time to calm themselves down. During this time, teachers allow them space to calm down. Once students are calm, teachers engage in one-on-one conversations with them to discuss the cause of their sadness or anger. (2) Students demonstrate empathy towards classmates who are struggling. When a classmate shows confusion, students often ask if their classmate is having trouble understanding the teacher's explanation or instructions. Subsequently, students help their classmates by re-explaining using simple language. (3) Confidence and responsibility in expressing opinions can be observed in students' eagerness to answer questions from the teacher during the learning process. (4) Students' ability to explain issues is evident when there are problems in the classroom; some students are able to testify and explain issues during problem-solving processes mediated by the homeroom teacher. (5) Students' understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships of their actions is evident when a student is about to engage in misconduct observed by the teacher. In such instances, the teacher asks the student about the consequences of their actions, which helps them realize that their actions could harm themselves.

From various social-emotional skills of Grade 2 students encountered during the research, it is known that one of the factors contributing to the development of these skills is the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Program. This can be observed through the various activities within the SEL Program aimed at honing students' social and emotional skills. Moreover, SEL is integrated into other subjects outside of the activities included in the SEL Program itself. The activities conducted within the SEL Program at Prestige Bilingual School include: (1) SEL lessons, which involve learning materials related to students' social and emotional aspects in a one-hour lesson each week; (2) classroom goals, which are class rules developed collaboratively by the homeroom teacher and students; (3) meet-up, which is a 35-minute discussion session between students and the homeroom teacher before the start of core learning activities; (4) buddy-up, which involves pairing students with different classmates; (5) community builders, which are whole-class play activities; (6) SEL week, which is a celebration activity conducted once per semester.

Program Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is defined as an integral part of human education and development. SEL is a teaching and learning process aimed at developing and acquiring the skills, knowledge, and beliefs necessary for individuals to succeed in school, work, and life. (Harmony Academy, n.d.). SEL combines and extends several areas of focus previously used to describe and promote educational intervention programs in this field, such as social competence training, positive child and adolescent development, violence prevention, character education, mental health promotion, and others. SEL does not replace other important efforts but provides a framework that allows the best qualities of these programs to be combined to help meet the educational and mental health needs of children and adolescents (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

SEL aims for all children, adolescents, and adults to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop a healthy identity; manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals; experience and demonstrate empathy towards others; build and maintain supportive relationships; and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL promotes educational equity and excellence by fostering relationships between schools, families, and communities to create learning environments and experiences that include trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and relevant curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of injustice while empowering children, adolescents, and adults to collaboratively create schools that thrive and contribute to safer, healthier, and fairer communities (Collaborative for Academic, Social, n.d.-b).

From the explanation above, SEL can be interpreted as an effort to create a safe and comfortable learning environment by meeting the social and emotional needs of children with the assistance of adults in their surroundings through various activities integrated into this program. Based on the interviews conducted, it is known that Prestige Bilingual School has been implementing the SEL program since 2019. The main objectives of implementing the SEL Program in this school, according to the interview results with the school principal (AS), are as follows:

"The consideration is, how can we ensure that students' academics are effectively supported based on research findings? Within this context, numerous issues or challenges arise. Based on this observation, the question arises: what should be done to address them? It turns out that one solution is through SEL."

From the explanation, it is understood that the goal of the SEL Program is to improve students' academic performance while addressing the challenges and obstacles encountered in the process. This is supported by various studies conducted worldwide, showing that SEL helps children and adolescents achieve academic success (Collaborative for Academic, Social, n.d.-b).

The SEL program has its foundation or source that serves as a guideline for its implementation. The SEL Program Coordinator (PFK) stated:

"The curriculum used in implementing this program is Sanford Harmony. Sanford Harmony is developed by CASEL, which stands for Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. So indeed, CASEL was the first to propose and is now often the general reference. It is within CASEL that the cores or essentials of SEL are introduced."

Essentially, the initiator and main reference for the implementation of this program is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). It is within CASEL that the five core competencies of SEL are introduced. According to CASEL, the five core competencies of SEL are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Collaborative for Academic, Social, n.d.-a). Meanwhile, the curriculum used in implementing this program is Sanford Harmony, which is developed from CASEL.

Students' Social and Emotional Skills

The development of social and emotional skills is crucial to start as early as possible to facilitate students in navigating life. Social and emotional skills of students in school are among the factors influencing their academic achievement. These skills also aid students in adapting to the school environment as a whole. Based on the research findings, it is evident that the second-grade students at Prestige Bilingual Private Elementary School have demonstrated good social skills, ranging from their relationships with peers, teachers, to their adaptability in learning.

A positive relationship between students and peers relates to their ability to collaborate, give praise and advice, help each other in difficulties, and accept differences. Through observations conducted, it was found that the second-grade students at Prestige Bilingual Private Elementary School collaborate well when instructed to complete group tasks, and usually, more capable students assist others who find it difficult to understand assigned tasks. Additionally, students are accustomed to advising each other when one of them deviates. Moreover, the diverse composition of the class does not lead students to be selective in choosing friends.

The positive relationship between students and teachers can be observed through polite language and formal communication used by students when speaking to teachers, both inside and outside the classroom. Meanwhile, students' adaptability in learning is demonstrated by their ability to understand and carry out activities in accordance with the given instructions, as well as to complete assignments on time.

In addition to social skills, the emotional skills of the second-grade students at this school are also considered good. The research findings indicate that students are not afraid to express their emotions: joy, sadness, anger, disappointment, and understand how to manage them. For example, when feeling sad to the point of crying, students will take time to calm themselves down. Moreover, students are empathetic towards their classmates who are having difficulty understanding the lessons and are usually willing to help them. Students are confident and responsible in expressing their opinions, as seen in their eagerness to answer questions from teachers during the learning process. They can also explain themselves if problems arise, and they understand the cause and effect of their actions.

The Role of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in Developing Students' Social and Emotional Skills

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has a positive impact on students. It can prevent issues during students' developmental stages by promoting positive habits, positive mental health, and preparing students to become responsible adults. According to research, students participating in SEL programs show improvements in personal, social, and academic aspects of life. The positive benefits of SEL for learners include social and emotional skills, as well as attitudes towards themselves and their school. SEL can also address emotional issues, stress, and academic achievement among students (Payton et al., 2011).

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is considered to influence students' social and emotional skills because the implementation process of SEL involves various activities related to students' social and emotional aspects. As stated by Helaluddin and Alamsyah in their research, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a process for children and adults to understand and manage emotions, establish and achieve positive goals, empathize with others, build and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Helaluddin & Alamsyah, 2019). This is in line with Greenberg's opinion that through age-appropriate classroom instruction and the application of learning in everyday situations, SEL programs develop children's skills to recognize and manage their emotions, appreciate others' perspectives, set positive goals, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010).

In line with the opinions of various experts mentioned above and previous research findings, this study also found that the SEL Program plays a role in fostering students' social and emotional skills. Based on the research results, it is known that there are various activities conducted at SD Prestige Bilingual School in the SEL Program to support the growth of students' social and emotional skills, as follows:.

1) SEL Learning

SEL learning is the main activity of this program. This activity includes SEL material learning consisting of lessons, stories, worksheets, and role-playing. From the prepared syllabus, it is understood that the purpose of SEL learning implementation at school is for students to delve into topics related to social-emotional skills, making it easier for them to apply them in daily life. The time allocation for SEL learning itself is 1x35 minutes per week or counted as one lesson hour per week.

The materials presented are sourced from Sanford Harmony. In each grade level, there is one introduction unit and four material units, namely (1) Introduction unit: introducing students to the Harmony SEL program, (2) Unit 1 Being My Best Self: students learn about who they are and their interests by learning to connect and manage emotions; thoughts; and feelings; as well as developing a growth mindset, (3) Unit 2 Valuing Each Other: students learn to recognize and appreciate each other's emotions; perspectives; feelings; contributions through different experiences; and learn to support each other in beneficial ways, (4) Unit 3 Communicating with Each Other: students learn and practice various social skills related to communication; including non-verbal behavior; conversation skills; and listening and responding, (5) Unit 4 Learning from Each Other: students learn helpful approaches to problem-solving and conflict resolution; as well as correcting mistakes to encourage healthy relationships. In

practice, the materials in SEL learning do not have to be taught sequentially but can be adjusted according to what is currently happening in the classroom with the available materials.

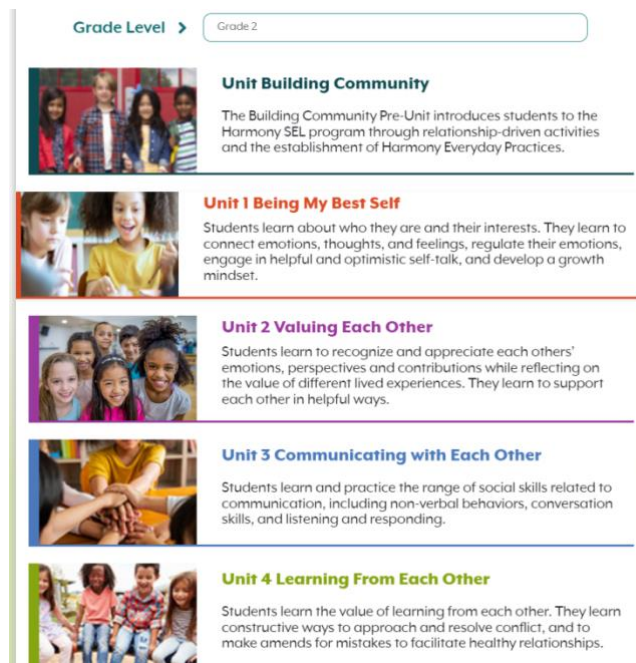


Figure 1. Available materials for class 2

When entering a new unit, the homeroom teacher will send a home letter to all parents. The home letter contains an invitation for parents to collaborate with the school through the implementation of activities recommended by the school to be carried out at home according to the upcoming unit to be studied. The goal is for parents and teachers at the school to synergize in achieving the same targets or goals. This can also help parents understand how far their child's learning journey has progressed. The existence of this home letter is considered very beneficial for parents of students. As stated by one of the parents (NSA) during the interview:

“Of course, I'm very glad to receive it. Because from there, I get to know how far my child's learning has progressed, and what my child is currently studying. It also includes activities that I can do as a parent to help facilitate their learning. So, there's alignment between parents and teachers, with no discrepancies between what parents say at home and what their teacher says at school, which could confuse the child.”

In each provided unit, there's not only content but also stories, role-playing, and relevant worksheets corresponding to each unit's title. All materials, stories, role-playing, and worksheets are available only in English. This also poses a challenge for homeroom teachers in delivering them to students. Through this SEL learning, it's hoped that students can enhance their social-emotional skills more effectively and purposefully.

2) *Classroom Goals*

The activities carried out at the beginning of the new academic year can be understood as agreements, expectations, rules, or class promises. From interviews with

homeroom teachers and SEL program coordinators, it is known that the purpose of creating classroom goals is to establish learning objectives or contracts that can be pursued collectively by all class members to create a comfortable, conducive, and supportive learning environment. Classroom goals contain objectives that reflect how each class member interacts with one another and are understood. Classroom goals can also serve as reminders when students engage in behaviors that contradict the agreed-upon rules. As stated by homeroom teacher 2 (NIMA) in the interview:

"When things in the classroom don't go as planned, we can refer back to the learning contract we established at the beginning. For other subject teachers, apart from SEL instruction itself, they can still incorporate SEL into their teaching. For instance, if there's a disturbance or something that doesn't align with the classroom goals, teachers can remind students of the class rules that have been established and agreed upon."

In the process of developing classroom goals, students are fully engaged in providing ideas, input, and suggestions. Meanwhile, the homeroom teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding the discussion until reaching an agreement and conclusion. As stated by homeroom teacher 2 (NIMA):

"Students are engaged to provide or initiate ideas regarding what they would like to convey related to their classroom goals. What do they want? How should they be in this class 2? Together, we agree and capture the main points. So, it's not the teacher determining how you should be, but students are invited to contribute ideas, as they will be the ones implementing them later."

By providing students with the opportunity to directly engage in the formulation of these objectives or rules, it can foster confidence in expressing opinions, empathy towards others, and polite communication with teachers when presenting their ideas. Students' involvement in drafting classroom goals is also expected to make them feel ownership and more accountable for the agreements they formulate and agree upon together. This is hoped to make it easier for students to pursue these objectives and remember not to violate them. Once the key points of the class goals have been concluded, the teacher will display the classroom goals in the form of posters that are prominently placed in the classroom. All class members, including the homeroom teacher, will sign the classroom goals poster as a sign of agreement with the contract that has been established.



Figure 2. Classroom Goals poster posted in class II

3) Meet Up

The meet-up is a morning meeting between students and their homeroom teacher before entering the usual learning routine, scheduled for 1x35 minutes per week. The purpose of this activity is to establish and monitor expectations regarding how to treat each other, share experiences, solve problems, and build community (Sanford Harmony, 2024). This activity serves as a transition program for students, bridging their experiences at home before heading to school with the various routines they will encounter at school. As stated by the principal (AS) during the interview regarding this matter.:

“The meet-up session is very beneficial because it helps with the transition of children from home to school, and it's important to consider how teachers accommodate this. Each child has their own story from their journey to school, right? However, we still need to accommodate them, as they might have stayed up late at night or were promised something by their parents that hasn't been fulfilled, which can make them upset. Children need affirmation and to have their feelings acknowledged.”

The meet-up serves as a platform for students to interact, share experiences, and solve problems. The teacher initiates warm conversations by asking various questions from quick connection cards available on the Sanford Harmony website. <https://online3.harmonysel.org/harmony/page/quick-connection-cards>.

Furthermore, during the meet-up session, there is also a reflection on what has been achieved and what has not been achieved based on the classroom goals. If there are still unfinished goals, discussions will be held to identify the difficulties students face, their reasons, and potential solutions.

The implementation of the meet-up session has various positive impacts. Students become more prepared to start their academic activities because the emotions and various stories brought from home have been accommodated by the homeroom teacher. Consequently, students are trained to express their emotions and articulate problems. Likewise, students are trained to understand the cause-and-effect

relationship of their actions through reflection on the classroom goals, which is commonly done during the meet-up session.

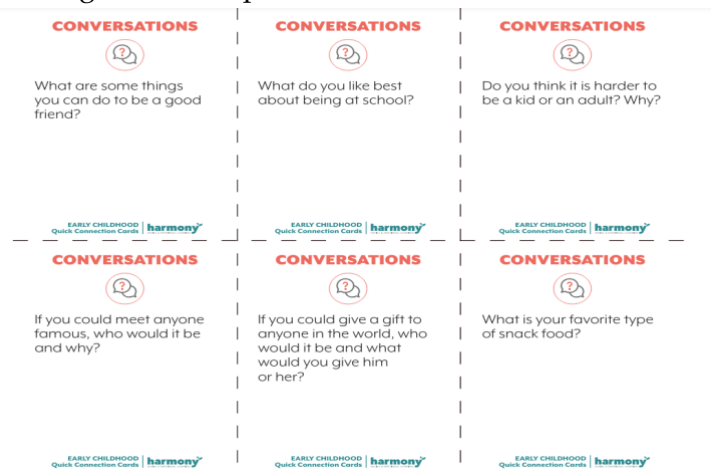


Figure 3. Example of quick connection cards used in meet up activities

4) *Buddy Up*

Buddy up is a peer friendship system deliberately designed to provide students with opportunities to get to know each other, interact, collaborate, and learn together. In this activity, students will be paired up into several pairs. They will play games or engage in predetermined activities with their partners using quick connection cards provided by Sanford Harmony. The implementation time is 2x35 minutes per week.

The student pairs will be changed once a week or every two weeks, depending on the class's needs. By connecting students with different peers every week, buddy up fosters ongoing interactions between diverse students, enhancing their relationships, collective motivation, and sense of social responsibility. This aligns with the statement made by the homeroom teacher (NIMA) during the interview:

“Later, students will be divided into several buddies, meaning they will be paired up. The goal is for students to become accustomed to befriending all students in the class, especially without any discrimination, so they won't selectively choose their friends.”

The buddy up activity plays a role in fostering good relationships among students with their peers. The skills honed include students' ability to collaborate, accept differences among friends, and assist peers who are facing difficulties.



Figure 4. Example of quick connection cards used in buddy up activities

5) *Community Builders*

Aligned with buddy up, this activity also involves games. Unlike buddy up, which is played in pairs, community builders involve collective game-playing activities that engage all class members. The games played are also provided by Sanford Harmony through quick connection cards. This activity is usually conducted between buddy up sessions each week.

The aim of community builders is to foster teamwork among students. It is also hoped that through this activity, students can become more familiar with one another. Additionally, students are encouraged to develop empathy and the ability to assist peers facing difficulties.



Figure 5. Example of quick connection cards used in community builders activities

6) *SEL Week*

The findings regarding the role of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in strengthening elementary school students' social and emotional skills not only provide a deeper understanding of how this intervention influences children's holistic growth, but also have significant practical implications. In particular, the results of this research can provide valuable direction for the development of a more holistic curriculum, which considers not only academic aspects but also important social and emotional skills. By better understanding the impact of SEL, schools and educational institutions can adapt their programs to more effectively support student growth. These findings can also be used as a basis for educational policy makers to support the implementation of SEL programs at various levels of education. Additionally, these findings have direct implications for improving student well-being by creating safer, more inclusive, and supportive learning environments. Thus, the results of this research not only enrich our knowledge about education, but also have a real impact in improving educational effectiveness and overall student well-being.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to explore the role of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in the growth of elementary school students' social and emotional skills, with a focus on the implementation of the SEL program at Prestige Bilingual School Elementary School and its impact on grade 2 students. The results of this research have important practical applications. These findings can provide evidence about the effectiveness of SEL programs in improving students' social and emotional skills, provide recommendations for educational practitioners about the integration of SEL in school curricula and activities, and support the development of more holistic education policies.

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