

# Will you be my friend?

## Social Emotional Learning and Elementary Students with Learning Disabilities

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# Presentation Goals

1. Review research on effective SEL instruction for students with LD
2. Describe an action research study on a classroom approach to teaching SEL and the study results



Research suggests social emotional learning (SEL) benefits all students through positively adjusting students' behaviors in the form of explicit instruction, increased reinforcement of prosocial and pro-self behaviors, and internalization of problems (Durlak et al., 2011). Further, SEL sets students up for the inevitable uncertainty of everyday life (Prince, Saveri, & Swanson, 2017).

Note: Group-based social skills intervention had been identified as the treatment of choice for improving peer relationships for Students with LD (and are at-risk for mental health challenges). Results of meta-analysis (Forness & Kavale, 1996) average effect .21 (small in strength).



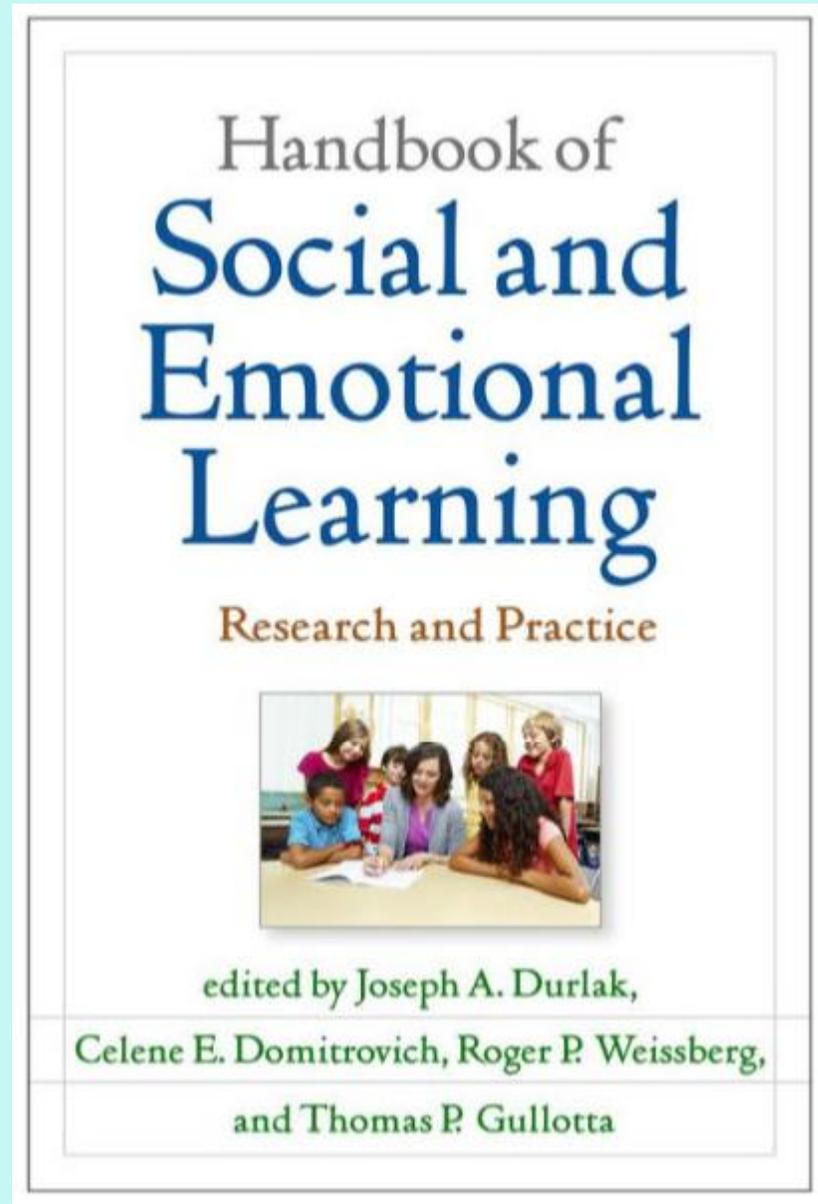
# What is Social and Emotional Learning?

CASEL Framework  
<https://casel.org/>



# Wiley & Siperstein (2015)

- Explained key difference in Social Skills Training (SST) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
  - SEL focuses more on students WITHOUT disabilities
  - SST focuses more on students WITH disabilities
  - Both have emphasis on a multi-tiered approach to school intervention
    - SEL is addressed in mostly Tier 1
    - SST is address in mostly Tier 2 and Tier 3
- Promoting social and emotional competence MUST include students with disabilities
- Believe the current push for school-based SEL programs presents an OPPORTUNITY for collaboration between SST and SEL to identify and implement evidence-based practices that can achieve the best outcomes for students with disabilities



# SST

# SEL

Collection of interventions for Ss with HI disabilities. Despite it's popularity, SST has not been shown to be a strong form of intervention (Forness & Kavale, 1996)

Takes into account the importance of social development while remediating social competence deficits (Gresham, Sugai, Horner, 2001)

The foundation of SEL combines social, emotional, and ethical development to form a comprehensive pedagogical approach

Three domains: interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive  
Five core competencies: SelfA, SelfM, SocialA, relationship skills, and responsible descision making

SEL programs in 4 categories: skill-focused, academic integration, teaching practices, organization reform.  
Few published studies of SEL for Ss with LD.



- Many students **lack** social-emotional competencies (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011; Forness & Kavale, 1996).
- Students with high incidence disabilities, including learning disabilities (LD), often have **difficulties establishing relationships** and other social competencies (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008; Parker & Asher, 1987).
- Research suggests social emotional learning (SEL) **benefits all students** through positively adjusting students' behaviors in the form of explicit instruction, increased reinforcement of prosocial and pro-self behaviors, and internalization of problems (Durlak et al., 2011).



To expand on research regarding the influence that social and emotional learning has on students with high incidence LD, an action research study was undertaken on a social skills intervention for third and fourth-grade students with LD. There were two research question for this action research study:

1. What are the social emotional profiles of our students as seen by the students themselves and their parents?
2. What are the effects of class-wide social emotional learning instruction based on identified needs and strengths?



# Designing the Action Research Study

- The action research study was completed over the course of one academic year and began through a school-university partnership.
- Two teachers of students with learning disabilities and one university faculty member met to discuss how to support the social and emotional learning of their third and fourth-grade students and understand whether, in doing so, the students benefitted and the instruction was adequate and effective.
- In the planning stage, the team reviewed available assessment tools and selected the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales. They decided to collect and review data from the students and parents at the beginning of the year to help inform the selection of appropriate foci of lessons, and decided to complete it again at the end of the year to determine student benefit.
- During the planning phase, the teachers also identified a thirty-minute block of time on Wednesday afternoons for instruction weekly. The PEERS Curriculum was selected for teaching skills in the four areas identified.



# Results of Linear Regression on end-of-year Student SSIS

Model		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>													
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics			
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF		
1	(Constant)	10.577	.827		12.793	.000	8.947	12.207							
	Test	1.135	.523	.149	2.170	.031	.104	2.166	.149	.149	.149	1.000	1.000		

a. Dependent Variable: Grade

To understand the effects of this SEL instruction a linear regression was completed using the student SSIS scores. The results are detailed in Table 2.

The results of linear regression illustrate the effectiveness of the teaching intervention. Specifically, the Beta values indicate ‘test 2’ was higher by 1.135 and with statistical significance (see sig. value less than .05). While linear regression is often predictive, for this study we used it for diagnostic purposes only. For example, to apply the results to an entirely different group of kids we cannot control for all their differences and then it would not be predictive.



CASEL Framework	PEERS Curriculum Units
<b>Intrapersonal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Self-management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What is a friend?</b></li> <li>• Trading Information</li> <li>• Good Conversations</li> <li>• Electronic Conversations</li> <li>• <b>Social Media</b></li> <li>• <b>Humor</b></li> <li>• Joining Conversations</li> <li>• <b>Exiting Conversations</b></li> <li>• <b>Sportsmanship</b></li> <li>• <b>Handling Arguments</b></li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social awareness</li> <li>• Relationship Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What is a friend?</b></li> <li>• Trading Information</li> <li>• Good Conversations</li> <li>• Electronic Conversations</li> <li>• <b>Social Media</b></li> <li>• <b>Humor</b></li> <li>• Joining Conversations</li> <li>• <b>Exiting Conversations</b></li> <li>• <b>Sportsmanship</b></li> <li>• <b>Handling Arguments</b></li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive Competence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible Decision Making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic Conversations</li> <li>• <b>Social Media</b></li> <li>• <b>Humor</b></li> <li>• Joining Conversations</li> <li>• <b>Exiting Conversations</b></li> <li>• <b>Sportsmanship</b></li> <li>• <b>Handling Arguments</b></li> </ul>

## The 10 units from the PEERS Curriculum

Based on results from the SSIS

*Note: This table highlights which of the ten units from the PEERS curriculum falls under the components of the CASEL framework. The **bold** indicates that the unit embodies an educational component.*



# Discussion

- Using action research offers classroom teachers the opportunity to investigate and create solutions for the particular concerns they face by engaging in cycles of planning, acting, reflecting, thereby creating change that is relevant and beneficial for them.
- University school partnerships are important in supporting teachers to understand and evaluate their teaching practices.
- SEL and positive school climate are the foundations for students' academic and later life success (Learning Policy Institute, June 2018)
  - States should not use measures of SEL for high stake accountability purposes
  - States should consider including measures of school climate, supports for SEL, and related outcomes
  - States should provide districts with well-validated tools for measuring school climate
  - State agencies and districts should provide schools with resources and TA as they hold school accountable



# Discussion

- Students with LD benefit from direct, weekly, targeted SEL instruction. The model for this was Tier 1, all students received the instruction. However, Tier 2 principles of targeting skills through data and explicit instruction, scaffolding, modeling, and additional opportunities to practice are also incorporated.
- Tier 1 classroom instruction in SEL may need to be more explicit and driven by data to meet the needs of ALL students.
- More considerations for integrating academic and behavioral instruction

