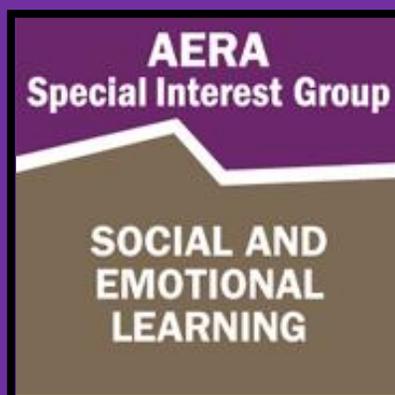


# Advances in SEL Research

American Educational  
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VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

### Welcome from the Chair Roisin P. Corcoran

We are happy to share the fall newsletter for the SEL Special Interest Group (SIG). Our SIG is now eight years old, and continues to grow. We now have 259 members—our highest to date! Our membership remains diverse and includes scholars, researchers, program developers, graduate students, and practitioners from colleges, universities, and research organizations from around the world.

Please share this newsletter with your colleagues and students, and ask them to join so that our SIG can continue to grow and become even more diverse. See page 12 for a step-by-step guide on how to become an AERA SEL SIG member. Also, the AERA SEL SIG Facebook page is up and running - see page 13 for information. Please join, invite others, and engage in the conversation! Research- and practice-based knowledge on SEL is growing, as is the appreciation of the importance of SEL among parents, educators, and policy makers. This appreciation of SEL is reflected in policy statements on post-secondary attainment, youth development, safety, and dropout prevention, as well as in the many attempts at distilling what we know about SEL and what some characterize as non-cognitive factors.

SEL is being implemented in many countries. It is important that our SIG continues to expand to reflect this growth and we continue to incorporate diverse perspectives on SEL.

This edition of our newsletter features reports of current research and practice in SEL conducted by members of our SIG as well as colleagues working in policy. We would like to thank our newsletter editors, Meghan McCormick and Colleen Pinar for assembling and publishing this issue - not an easy task. We also want to thank the contributors who took the time to share their important work. We encourage each of you to submit your work for next fall's edition of the SEL SIG newsletter.

AERA's Centennial Year is 2016. The Centennial Meeting will be held from Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in Washington, DC. The Annual Meeting, we hope, is a must attend on your calendar. We are seeking wide participation across the field of SEL research worldwide and across aligned fields and disciplines as we look forward to the second century of AERA. We will distribute more information about our SIG's activities at the AERA meeting in our spring newsletter.



## Other SIG News and Activities

### Program at the Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, April 2016

Our SIG's reviewers have now finished their reviews of submitted proposals. We received very high quality submissions to our SIG this year, totaling 47 paper and 7 session submissions. Following AERA's allocations for our SIG and a high standard of submissions, we were able to accept 5 paper/symposia sessions, 19 individual paper presentations, and will host 1 business meeting. We sincerely thank all SIG reviewers for their efforts in reviewing this year's submissions.

### Elections: Call for nominations

We are currently accepting nominations for appointed leadership positions. Don't delay! Help advance SIG objectives and connect with a network of researchers and practitioners that shares interests in social and emotional development and SEL programming.

Self-nominations and nominations of others are accepted. All positions span a 3-year term (as officer-elect, acting, and past) unless otherwise noted. Service requires AERA and SEL SIG membership at the time of appointment and entails 3-4 teleconferences per year and attendance at the SEL SIG annual business meeting when possible (held during AERA).

### Appointed Leadership Positions to Fill

1. Membership Chair-Elect
2. Communications Chair-Elect
3. Newsletter Editor-Elect
4. Webmaster/Social Media-Elect
5. Student Representative-Elect

Please contact our Secretary/Treasurer, Paul LeBuffe at [plebuffe@devereux.org](mailto:plebuffe@devereux.org) as soon as possible if you wish to make a nomination for one of the positions above.

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## Comments from our Editors Meghan McCormick & Colleen Pinar

Welcome to the Fall 2015 issue of our SEL SIG newsletter!!! This year, and for several years, we received many high quality submissions. Our submissions reflect growing SEL research and practice taking place across the country. Although some work is situated primarily in science and other work is situated primarily in practice or policy, these themes are increasingly merged in innovative, feasible, and rigorous ways, as is evident from the submissions below.

Themes across submissions evidence exciting areas of convergence in the SEL field. One clear theme is collaboration. The integration of science and practice in SEL seems to be facilitated when the work is a product of collaborative partnerships, such as those among government and non-profit organizations (e.g., "Growth of Social Emotional Competence in a Youth Development Program"), university researchers and school districts, educators and teachers (e.g., "Tools for Getting Along: Teaching Students to Problem Solve"), and youth themselves (e.g., "Teaching Social Emotional Learning to Middle School Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders").

Another theme is complex contexts for social-emotional development. Several submissions and announcements highlight the dynamic interrelationships between individual, developmental, and contextual characteristics as they relate to social-emotional learning. For example, "The Revelations of Asher: Toward Supreme Love in Self," describes how relationships promote social-emotional development.

A third theme is the use of sound and practical assessment and recent advances in technology to provide feedback to teachers, parents, students, and schools on SEL contexts and competencies. Several articles and announcements (e.g., "Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions Toward the Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching," "Developing Principals' Emotional Intelligence," and "Development of the Devereux Student Strengths

Assessment – High School Edition”) highlight the need for continuous improvement in schools.

Finally, these submissions demonstrate our increasing interest in implementation systems, structures, processes, and outcomes to better understand how to increase the capacity of schools to implement effective SEL programs and practices. This attention to implementation from a practice and research perspective is demonstrated by initiatives described in the “New Initiatives, Interventions, and Practices” section.

We are struck by the creativity, determination, and thoughtfulness represented in each of these projects, and we appreciate all those who work together to understand and promote social-emotional and academic development among the educators and students themselves. Thank you for your contributions and your excellence as we move the field forward. Enjoy the SEL SIG newsletter!

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## Innovative Research in SEL

### The Revelations of Asher: Toward Supreme Love in Self

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*The Revelations of Asher: Toward Supreme Love in Self* (forthcoming, Peter Lang) is an endarkened, feminist, new literacies event. It features innovative methodological advances to critically and creatively explore Black women’s *terror* in love. I define *terrors* as variations of emotional abuses and violences, in addition to mental and physical traumas. With poetry, prose, and analytic memos, I show how a group of ten (10) Black women’s talk and writings about relationships revealed epistemological and ontological revelations about terrors, after 9/11. These revelations are presented in

the context of a third wave new literacies framework; they are voiced and storied dynamically by the women’s seven (7) fragmented selves. Through the selves, I clarify the five (5) ways the women lived as lovers: *Main Chick, Side Chick, Bonnie, Bitch, and Victim*. As an alternative-response to these identities in love, I present a new way. I introduce the Supreme Lover Identity and illuminate its integral connection to social and emotional justice for and through Black women’s wisdom.

A lover identity is a person’s entire relational ideology and being. A warped lover identity (one ruled by unmediated emotional *terrors* in the soul) not only disables the formation of social, sexual, and romantic relationships, it disables familial, phileo, and communal relationships as well. Such disabilities undercut social and emotional justice work and activism because they stunt compassion, empathy, and altruism at their core. More than this, the Black women with whom I worked helped me to see that these *terrors* could function as possible impetuses for greater Terrors noted in post-9/11 narratives. We resolved to form resistances to emotional *terrors*, in efforts to interrupt their spark and spread and corruption of lover identity. When grasping the socioemotional learning and literacy of Black women forging new lover identities, I discovered a segue to further emotional justice for this group. Emotional justice means privileging and finding credible the interior life of a person (Staples, forthcoming). It means to create space for that life and advocate for its acknowledgment, healing, and celebration from the personal to the public realm. Emotional justice happens when both oppressed and oppressive people learn to speak their pain and pleasure (and iterations of emotional senses in between) by becoming emotionally conscious, emotionally literate, and emotionally whole both alone and together (Staples, forthcoming). Because socioemotional literacy was at the crux of the project, socioemotional learning (SEL) and literacy are primary results.

I define socioemotional learning and literacy as awareness of how various emotive states are triggered, sustained, perpetuated, communicated, and bear interpersonal and social impact on self, other, and community (Staples, forthcoming, 2011, 2012). This literacy includes awareness of ways to identify,

facilitate, communicate, and alter the evolution of emotional states in healthful ways; it also includes a rather complex understanding of ways to navigate social situations that trigger such emotional states. This awareness and agility comes from deep knowledge of one's interior life. *The Revelations of Asher* demonstrates how proficiency in socioemotional learning and literacy happens by self partnering and self parenting with all aspects of self as they voice and story within one's interior; this proficiency leads to self-integration and self-actualization (i.e. happiness and well-being) (Staples, 2012). Beyond this, it can lead to emotional justice for social justice through women's wisdom.



## Developing Principals' Emotional Intelligence

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Over the past decade, researchers have identified several keys to successful educational change (Osher et al., 2007; Miller, 2013). They have demonstrated that the commitment and active support of the principal is the main predictor for maintaining change in school settings and ensuring positive outcomes for students (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). According to Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004), leadership is one of the two most critical factors for student achievement, closely following teacher quality.

Principals positively shape school culture when they distribute leadership and build learning communities of self-directed professionals who assume responsibility for ongoing innovation in their teaching (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). The development of leaders' Emotional Intelligence (EI) is widely accepted as essential to effective performance in global business organizations, but to educators, the concept of EI

within leadership is still new. The development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills is the missing link in school leaders' preparation (Patti, Senge, Madrazo, & Stern, 2015). These abilities have the potential to transform teaching and learning through the human interactions between school leaders and others.

In addition, recent research on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs highlights principals as the key gatekeepers for rigorous and effective implementation. For example, Wanless, Patton, Rimm-Kaufman, & Deutsch (2013) found that 70% of teachers identified their principal as the main obstacle to social emotional learning (SEL) implementation. In this study, teachers identified three main factors that facilitated SEL implementation:

- Principals' motivation for implementation with the goal to improve students' outcomes.
- Principals' commitment to embrace SEL intervention in all related programs at the school.
- Principals' support for implementation through the provision of materials and time to implement the curriculum.

Given these findings, districts implementing change, including SEL programming or any other, should provide support and professional development to the principals who will be in charge of leading the way. Patti, Holzer, Brackett, and Stern (2015) stressed the need to invest in high quality leadership development to create positive school cultures that nurture and support administrator and teacher leadership for student success. Professional development for school leaders should focus on developing their own core EQ skills, supporting teachers to embed SEL in regular instruction, and creating a school culture where social and emotional skills are woven into the fabric of the school (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013).

But how can we develop principals who are motivated, committed, and supportive? One aspect often ignored in SEL research is principals' understanding of what social-emotional competencies look like in practice, and how they can

be developed in both students and adults. In addition, principals need to be able to learn and develop *their own* social-emotional competencies, so they can be better leaders for teachers, students, and families (Patti, Senge, Madrazo, & Stern, 2015). Twenty-first century professional development for principals is effective when principals receive coaching in emotional intelligence skills and practices (Patti, Holzer, Brackett, & Stern, 2015).

During the 2015-16 school year, principals and assistant principals in an urban school district in California will engage in a process to develop their leadership skills as they deepen their understanding of their own social and emotional competencies. This research will draw from a combination of quantitative data, with principals taking the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence and the Leadership Vital Signs assessments, and qualitative data, with focus groups and individual interviews conducted during the year. The goal will be to understand how we can better support leadership development through emotional intelligence.

Please contact us if you have conducted research with principals or are interested in learning more about this exciting project.



## Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions towards The Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching

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For the past three semesters, I have been integrating into all my pre-service teacher education courses the framework from *The Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching: A Practical Guide for Educators* (Weaver & Wilding, 2013). The five dimensions are cultivating an open heart, engaging the self-observer, being present, establishing respectful boundaries, and developing emotional capacity. I use this framework to help foster social-emotional competence in my students and to help them focus not only on the “what” and “how” of teaching, but also the question of “who is the self who teaches?” (Palmer, 2007). I agree with Greene & Kim (2014)

who state that an important “purpose of our work with new teachers is to remind them who they are, to empower them with a realization of their core strengths, and to give them the experience of connecting with their strengths” (p. 103). More details about how and why I integrate these dimensions are described in Dorman (2014).

I have been collecting and analyzing data in the form of students' written and oral responses to the Weaver and Wilding text to address the research questions, *How are pre-service teachers responding to the Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching? What are their attitudes and perceptions about this framework? How does it appear to affect them?* The purpose of this short article is to share overall, emerging themes in this ongoing research project as illustrated by excerpts of student comments.

### Overall Responses to the Text

“These readings examined a more compassionate and introspective side of the teaching profession than I’m personally used to. I’m used to having teaching techniques and differentiation ideas and that sort of thing spoon-fed right down my throat, but actually stopping and being able to savor the idea of the *emotional* aspects of my future career is valuable, insightful, invigorating, and, not least, downright refreshing.

“I am happy that this is one of the selected texts in our course. If I remember nothing but these five dimensions as I journey into my career, I am confident that this will be an excellent starting point for me. These dimensions will give me something tangible, concrete, simple, and proven to work with. If nothing else, I can post the symbols in my room to remind me to stay grounded, present, and calm.”

“These dimensions really changed my life.”

### Drawn to the Concept of Authentic Presence

“One thing I found both interesting and helpful was the idea that I am *allowed* to be imperfect. It’s hugely inspiring to me to know that I’m allowed to be human; to have flaws, and idiosyncrasies, and be better at some things than others.”

“The idea of having a ‘Teaching Presence’ is one of the reasons I decided to follow my heart in becoming a teacher.”

### **Supported by Being Present and Engaging the Self-Observer**

“I realized how bad I am at staying in the present. I am absolutely horrible at it; I always have so many things running through my mind and find myself rather distracted throughout the day. I am always thinking about what needs to be done and how I am going to do it. I never realized how big of a problem this could be until I read this chapter. If I am too busy worrying about my day and not being in the present then how am I supposed to expect my students to do the same? If I am not in the present I am going to miss out on experiences, connecting with my students, and teachable moments that could define what I am teaching in my classroom. By taking advantage of the activities for mindfulness I should be able to build my mental ability to stay in the present.”

“One thing I will begin to practice now before I get into the classroom is the act of not reacting but responding. By being aware of the negative emotions rising, or anger wanting to take over, I can pause and allow it to fade until I respectfully and mindfully go about conflict. It is important to be patient and conscious within the classroom because aggravating situations will arise.”

### **Encouragement to Expand Emotional Range and Explore Vulnerability**

“I found that the emotions I tend to feel comfortable with are happiness, excitement, frustration, and conflict; however, I tend to reject sadness and anger because I feel that they make me too vulnerable. Although I know vulnerability is a key aspect to connecting with your students, this feels very risky to me and I must learn to let my guard down and find the right balance of emotions.”

“I am comfortable dealing with most emotions except sadness. I do not know how to deal with people when they are extremely sad or crying. I need to work on this because I do not want my students feeling like I do not care about them and their problems. I have to look at myself and why this emotion makes me uncomfortable so I can work with others and their emotions.”

### **Builds Peer-to-Peer Understanding and Communication**

“The five dimensions have helped me to hold empathetic space for my peers so that we can have the opportunity to work through the challenging, conflicting content.”

“I remember feeling like I need to take a few deep breaths before I write this [response to a group case discussion]...I engaged the five dimensions in that moment specifically so it wouldn't come out inflamed.”

“The process of being self-aware [in our class discussions] helped us be able to speak to our emotions and be more open to each other and more accepting in the process.”

### **Conclusion**

As illustrated by the student voices above, the Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching appear to be offering my pre-service teacher students helpful perspectives and tools for developing into socially and emotionally competent teachers who know how to connect their inner and outer lives to create authentic presence. I strongly encourage other teacher educators to explore the book and consider integrating it into their work.



### **New Initiatives, Interventions, and Practices**

#### **Growth of Social Emotional Competence in a Youth Development Program**

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Playworks is a national non-profit organization whose mission is “to improve the health and well being of children by increasing opportunities for physical activity and safe, meaningful play” (Playworks, 2013). Evaluations of Playworks have pointed to many positive effects, including improvement in school climate (London, Westrich, Stokes-Guinan, & McLaughlin, 2015), reductions in bullying (Forston, James-Burdumy, Bleeker, Beyler,

London, Westrich, Stokes-Guinan, & Castrechini, 2013), and improvements in academic performance (Fortson et al., 2013). However, empirical evidence regarding the impact of Playworks on the growth of Social Emotional Competence (SEC) has been limited. The Center for Prevention Research in Social Welfare at UC Berkeley, under the leadership of Dr. Sarah Accomazzo and Dr. Valerie Shapiro, recently analyzed data from an evaluation of Playworks to determine whether growth in SEC was evident among 4th and 5th grade students who were involved in the Playworks Junior Coach Leadership Program.

Participation in the Junior Coach Leadership program involves receiving an after-school leadership curriculum from Playworks staff and then leading recess games, mediating recess conflicts, and modeling positive recess behavior for younger students. Junior Coaches were assessed using the *Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA; LeBuffe, Shapiro, Naglieri, 2009/2014)*, a strength-based behavior rating scale designed to assess SEC in youth from kindergarten through eighth grade. The *DESSA* yields a composite score and *T*-scores across eight domains: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Relationship Skills, Goal-Directed Behavior, Personal Responsibility, Decision Making, and Optimistic Thinking. Coaches (Playworks staff) completed a *DESSA* on each student after students completed “job training” in November 2014 (Pretest) and again in April 2015 (Posttest). Parents/caregivers and classroom teachers were also invited to complete a *DESSA* on each student.

Of the 496 students participating in Junior Coach programming, 268 (50%) had at least one completed pretest and posttest. There were no significant differences in the grade or gender of students who participated and those with complete data, nor between pre-test scores of students with one Coach rating and those who had complete Coach data. Coach ratings indicate that students gained an average of four points in SEC between pretest and posttest ( $p < .001$ ). The magnitude of this change is characterized as medium ( $d = .51$ ) and is above the average effect size in the literature for psychological, behavioral, and educational interventions (Wilson & Lipsey, 1993). Growth was not detected within Teacher or Caregiver ratings. Teachers, however,

were more likely to complete posttest *DESSA* ratings on students with higher pretest scores ( $p < .001$ ), and only a small number of caregivers participated, both of which could hinder the detection of an overall effect. Despite this, 84% of students who were determined at pretest to have a “need for instruction” in SEC by coaches experienced reliable improvement between pretest and posttest assessments. This suggests that many students improved in SEC while participating in the Playworks Junior Coach Leadership Program. Future studies should consider further incentivizing teacher and parent participation and using a randomized comparison group design to identify the extent to which these differences in SEC can be attributed to programming.



## A New Middle School Curriculum Fully Integrating SEL And Character Virtues

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In previous issues of this newsletter, our team has reported on the development and refinement of a middle school social-emotional learning curriculum called Life, College, and Career Advisory (LCCA). The Rutgers Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Lab collaborated with New Brunswick Middle School to develop this new SEL program from evidence-based pedagogy for the urban school context (Ryan et al., 2014; Elias & Butler, 2005; Elias & Arnold, 2006; Elias, 1997). The program was implemented for two years using feedback from teachers and students to refine the curriculum. Data collected on school

climate and student discipline showed consistent improvement throughout time of implementation. After the successful implementation in New Brunswick Middle School, the LCCA program was revised to include more explicit SEL skill-building integrated with lessons for character development. To guide teachers in integrating the program into their academic classes, a monthly “Throughline Sheet” was incorporated into the curriculum with a function to provide a list of actionable steps to improve SEL skills. Funding from the John Templeton Foundation has allowed this program to be implemented into the Jersey City Public Middle Schools.

The new SEL and character development program is called MOSAIC, which stands for Mastering Our Skills and Inspiring Character. MOSAIC was created using the same evidence-based resources and pedagogies as LCCA (e.g., Lewis, 2005; Elias & Butler, 2005). An advisory board of experts in character education, SEL, and urban school contexts was also involved in the curriculum development process for MOSAIC. The MOSAIC program is a school-based intervention that aims to define a sense of Noble Purpose (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003) in youth supported by a constellation of core virtues that include: positive purpose, compassionate forgiveness, compassionate gratitude, constructive creativity, responsible diligence, helpful generosity, and optimistic future-mindedness. Additionally, the SEL skills that are explicitly incorporated are emotion regulation, communication, empathy and social problem solving. Each month is centered on a main theme that is supported by a selected virtue and two skills. The activities include pedagogical methods such as debates, conversation series, service projects, and teacher-led discussions.

In addition to the teacher-facilitated activities, MOSAIC incorporates a component, called the “Ambassador Program,” that gives students the opportunity to apply the skills they are learning on relevant issues (Ryan & Bell, 2013). Similar to process used in the pilot LCCA program, two students from each MOSAIC classroom are elected as Ambassadors to serve as classroom leaders. They are expected to maintain the responsibility of facilitating monthly discussions within their classroom through an activity called School-Community Action Series. The Ambassadors lead

discussions about school- or community-related issues as well as engage students to give feedback and suggestions that are directed to the appropriate area of the school depending on the concern. The Ambassador Program aims to inspire students to develop a sense of purpose by encouraging them to apply and practice the MOSAIC virtues and skills in leadership roles. The initial year of MOSAIC will be very much like the pilot LCCA program, where feedback from teachers and students will be used to refine the curriculum. SEL programs are always meant to grow with the needs of the schools into which they are introduced, as LCCA has had to develop into MOSAIC.



### **Tools for Getting Along: Teaching Students to Problem Solve**

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It is estimated that 20% to 25% of school-aged children may be considered at risk for developing a significant behavioral problem. Externalizing behaviors such as noncompliance, disruption, and aggression can weaken students’ learning opportunities and have long lasting negative effects into adulthood. As it is unlikely that students at risk of developing problem behaviors will be successful without support, there is a need for proactive social-emotional learning (SEL) programs that counter disruptive, anti-social, and aggressive behavior by teaching skills that promote positive emotional and behavioral self regulation processes.

Researchers have shown that cognitive-behavioral interventions (CBIs) can improve self-regulatory mechanisms and thereby contribute to positive social problem solving and enhance SEL. CBIs combine behavioral and cognitive components to influence underlying cognitive processes that are essential to successful interpersonal problem solving. Use of CBIs to teach students social problem solving also enhances the probability that SEL skills will

generalize to novel settings and be maintained over time, as students learn to self-regulate rather than relying solely on external reinforcement. CBIs focus on strengthening students' ability to regulate their own behavior and are especially effective when delivered at the universal level (within the regular education classroom), so that students at risk for behavior are taught alongside typical peers.

### **The Tools for Getting Along Curriculum**

*Tools for Getting Along (TFGA)* is a universally delivered CBI designed to teach students to use social problem solving when experiencing interpersonal conflict using direct instruction, teacher modeling, and role-plays with explicit self-talk. As *TFGA* is delivered class-wide, all students, including those at risk for emotional or behavioral difficulties, participate in discussions and activities that are relevant to the real-life challenges and social situations they experience and benefit from the perspectives and solutions of others.

Based on Crick and Dodge's social information processing model to account for social cognition's role in the development of aggression, the problem-solving sequence imbedded in *TFGA* includes six steps that parallel the model: Recognizing a social problem situation and calming down to engage cognition (Steps 1 & 2), parallel to encoding, interpretation, and mental representation of environmental cues; defining a social problem in terms of goals and barriers (Step 3), parallel to goal clarification or selection; brainstorming possible solutions (Step 4), parallel to response access or construction; and selecting, enacting, and evaluating a response choice (Steps 5 & 6), parallel to the response decision and behavioral enactment steps. Instructional strategies include cognitive modeling, strategically placed role-plays for practice opportunities, small group activities, and explicit application of strategies to realistic social scenarios. Following the 20-lesson core, six booster lessons provide review, practice, and opportunities to generalize learned skills through student constructed role-plays and solving social problems they have actually experienced.

### **Findings**

We have implemented *TFGA* with over 2,000 students in approximately 60 4th and 5th grade

classrooms across multiple socio-economically and culturally diverse elementary schools. Findings from our two randomized controlled field trials have indicated that *TFGA* has positive effects, compared to control, on students' social problem solving, aggression, teacher-reported contextualized executive function (self-regulation), and student-reported anger and anger management. A partial replication study substantiated these findings, and additional research indicated that many positive outcomes were maintained at one-year follow-up.



## **Teaching Social Emotional Learning to Middle School Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: The I Control Curriculum**

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Students who receive special education services for significant social-emotional and behavioral needs experience a host of poor outcomes, including school failure and high rates of dropout, post-school unemployment, and incarceration. To alter these negative trajectories, school professionals need effective social emotional learning (SEL) interventions that target needed cognitive-behavioral skills. Specifically, researchers have emphasized the importance of focusing SEL instruction for students with EBD on self-regulatory abilities, to enable them to monitor and modulate their behavior, thoughts, and emotions intentionally to attain personal goals. Further, a growing literature base indicates that self-regulation is intricately linked with underlying

neurocognitive mechanisms known as executive functions (EF) that include working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control. An individual recruits these EF processes when engaging in self-regulation in key domains such as goal setting, emotion regulation, and social problem solving. Further, students with EBD have demonstrated poor EF skills, and researchers have found a link between deficits in EF and externalizing behavior problems. Thus, students with EBD need intensive, evidence-based interventions to improve their self-regulation and ultimately, their school and life outcomes.

### **The *I Control* Curriculum**

To promote the self-regulation of middle school students with significant emotional and behavioral problems, we developed the *I Control* curriculum – an EF based intervention designed to improve students’ SEL outcomes. *I Control* includes two primary components: a teacher-delivered curriculum and a computer-based Brain Training Lab (BTL). The theoretically grounded curriculum consists of four units, including an introductory unit on *I Control* and EF skills, followed by units on the self-regulatory domains of goal setting, emotion regulation, and social problem solving. The 46 lessons last about 30 minutes each, are designed to be taught at a rate of two per week, and include direct instruction, teacher modeling, guided and independent practice, and cumulative review. Frequent practice opportunities consist of a variety of engaging student activities (e.g., role-plays, partner- and team-based tasks, journaling) that help students learn and support the generalization of self-regulatory skills. In addition to the *I Control* lessons, students participate in the BTL approximately 30 minutes a week; this direct EF training includes developmentally appropriate computerized games that enlist working memory, cognitive shift, and inhibitory control. Students use a self-monitoring system to track and record their progress.

### ***I Control* Pilot Study: Preliminary Findings**

We conducted an initial pilot study using a randomized design to explore the effect of *I Control* on the self-regulation related skills of 167 middle school students with EBD across 17 different self-contained settings. We provided treatment group

teachers two days of professional development focused on self-regulation theory, EF skills, and *I Control* implementation components, and our research team observed their instruction to evaluate treatment fidelity and provide coaching as needed.

From our pilot study, we found evidence that *I Control* had positive effects on several student outcomes. Students in the treatment group, compared to control students, exhibited the following outcomes after being taught the curriculum:

- More knowledge of curricular content (an important precursor to skill enactment);
- For students with the poorest scores at baseline, more positive teacher-reports related to bullying (exclusion, coercion of others), externalizing behavior (verbal, physical aggression), and hyperactivity (impulsiveness, inattention, distractibility), and more positive self-reports related to internalizing and externalizing behavior;
- For all students, regardless of baseline performance, more positive teacher-reported social skills;
- More positive teacher-reported behavior regulation (including ability to shift between mental sets and control emotions) for students with poorer initial skills;
- Better ability to engage in self-management and monitoring (metacognition);
- Better self- and teacher-reported emotion control; and
- A greater self-reported tendency to approach a problem positively for students who had a more negative approach at baseline.

Given these preliminary findings, we think that *I Control* is a promising approach to SEL for middle school students with significant behavior problems. We intend to continue exploring its efficacy with a larger sample of students and in a variety of educational settings, and we are hopeful that it will add to the theoretical and evidence-based support for the effectiveness of teaching students, particularly those with EBD, self-regulatory skills.



## SEL SIG Announcements

### New Study of Prevalence of SEL Supports and Preschool Expulsion Practices in Chicago

**Kate Zinsser, Ph.D.**, University of Illinois at Chicago, [kzinsser@uic.edu](mailto:kzinsser@uic.edu)

With fellowship funding from the National Academy of Education, Dr. Zinsser's research team from the University of Illinois at Chicago is initiating a study of the prevalence of SEL supports in center-based preschools in 10 diverse Chicago neighborhoods. The overarching goal of this study is to understand whether and how access to child and teacher supports for SEL are associated with preschool expulsion and suspension practices. The multi-method study will begin with site visits and surveys in the winter of 2016. In-depth interviews with teachers and administrators will be conducted in the early summer of 2016. For more information, visit [setl.psch.uic.edu](http://setl.psch.uic.edu)



### University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Doctoral Program with SEL Emphasis

Katherine Zinsser, University of Illinois at Chicago  
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Roger Weissberg, University of Illinois at Chicago  
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Members of the SEL SIG, please share with students and colleagues the following information about the UIC Community and Prevention Research (CPR) doctoral program. The UIC CPR program trains students to conduct innovative research on important social issues. Students engage in research with core and affiliate faculty in urban schools, neighborhoods, and human service settings and gain expertise in understanding contextual influences on human development; research methods and methodologies; and developing and evaluating

prevention and intervention strategies. SEL SIG founding member Dr. Roger Weissberg works with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and focuses on research, theory, educational practices, and policies that promote the social, emotional, and academic competence of students from preschool through high school. SEL SIG member Dr. Katherine Zinsser's research focuses on identifying effective social-emotional teaching practices and the formation of educational work-place environments that promote teacher and child well-being. They are both recruiting new doctoral students for the fall 2016 term. Applications are due December 1<sup>st</sup> and more information can be found at <http://psch.uic.edu>

### Development of the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment – High School Edition

**Jennifer L. Fleming, M.S.**, Devereux Center for Resilient Children, [Jfleming2@devereux.org](mailto:Jfleming2@devereux.org)

National standardization for the High School Edition of the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA, LeBuffe, Shapiro, & Naglieri, 2009) has recently begun, which will expand the reach of Devereux's suite of strength-based, norm-referenced, behavior rating scales to children in kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The DESSA-HSE will meet a need identified within the larger SEL field to enable the screening and assessment of social and emotional competence of high school students (Haggerty, Elgin & Woolley, 2011). We would like to invite schools, out-of-school time programs, and organizations serving high school students to participate in standardization. Parents, teachers or staff, and youth may participate. For more information, please visit: <http://info.apperson.com/dessa-hse-signup>.



### Ripple Effects' SEL Skill-building Programs Released Across Platforms

**Heidi Johnecheck**, Ripple Effects,  
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Ripple Effects' learner-directed, comprehensive SEL digital programming is now able to support even more students. Programs are now available on Mac, PC, iPad, and Chromebook. In addition to promoting core social-emotional abilities, Ripple Effects is increasingly used as context-specific intervention for students to privately address risk factors in multiple domains. For more information, please visit [rippleeffects.com](http://rippleeffects.com)



## Special Issue of Prevention Science Focused on Social-Emotional Learning

Shannon Wanless, University of Pittsburgh,  
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Celene Domitrovich, Collaborative for Academic,  
 Social, and Emotional Learning,  
[domitrovich@casel.org](mailto:domitrovich@casel.org)

Announcing the November 2015 special issue of *Prevention Science*, entitled, *Readiness to Implement School-Based Social-Emotional Learning Interventions*, guest edited by Shannon B. Wanless & Celene E. Domitrovich. The special issue includes an introduction, seven empirical papers (led by Amy M. Roberts, Amanda P. Williford, Celene E. Domitrovich, John E. Lochman, Margaret Malloy, Elise T. Pas, & Shannon B. Wanless), and two commentaries (written by Brian K. Bumbarger & Joseph A. Durlak).



## New Project to Connect Parents to SEL

Jennifer Miller, Confident Parents, Confident Kids,  
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Shannon Wanless, University of Pittsburgh,  
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Jennifer Miller and Shannon Wanless, in collaboration with Roger Weissberg and Melissa

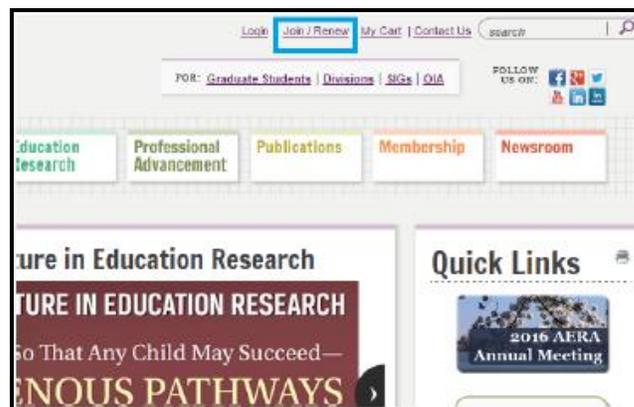
Schlinger at the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, would like to announce a new project to connect SEL and parenting. The project aims to define the parenting issues that may be addressed with SEL and raise questions for advancing its practice in everyday parenting. Grounded in an effort to include diverse parenting perspectives, the project plans to begin interviewing key stakeholders and put together a white paper to be disseminated at AERA 2016. If you are interested in parenting and SEL, please email: [jennifersmithmiller1@gmail.com](mailto:jennifersmithmiller1@gmail.com) or [swanless@pitt.edu](mailto:swanless@pitt.edu).



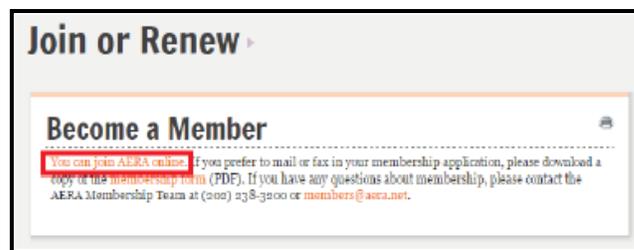
## How to Join AERA SEL SIG

### How to become an AERA member

1. Go to [AERA.net](http://AERA.net)
2. Click “Join/Renew” in the upper right corner



3. Click “You can join AERA online ”



4. Click “click here ” for a detailed guide on how to set up an AERA account

**Login**

Log in to your secure account to access your My AERA page, where you will find links to join or renew your membership, purchase books and merchandise, update your profile, review information about the AERA Annual Meeting, and more.

User Name:

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Select [Activate](#) or [Create My Account](#) below.

If you have yet to create your account on the AERA website, please [click here](#) for detailed instructions.

## How to become an SEL SIG member

1. Log into your AERA.net account
2. Scroll down past the “Membership” heading and click “Purchase Additional SIG Memberships”

**My Profile**

**My Profile** - Review and update your personal information on record with AERA including your name, affiliation, and contact information.

**Manage Email Broadcasting** - Due to the new Canadian Anti-Spam law, you need to confirm that you allow us to communicate with you via email. Please use this link to make your selection.

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3. Scroll down to “Social and Emotional Learning” (SIG 170) and click the check box on the right

Science Teaching and Learning (122)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00
Second Language Research (100)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$15.00
Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (190)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00
Statistics in Education: Signs, Meanings, and Multimodality (110)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$7.00
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<b>Social and Emotional Learning (170)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00
Social Studies Research (09)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00
Sociology of Education (112)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00
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Stress and Coping in Education (117)	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$5.00
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4. Go back to the top of the page and click the “Finish” button and follow the instructions to Check-out

## Join the AERA SEL SIG Facebook page

The SEL SIG has a Facebook Group! Join this vibrant community by clicking here. This is a place for SEL SIG members and others interested in SEL to participate in an open dialogue. We will be posting news and events relevant to the SEL community and welcome your contributions. Share ideas and comments and engage in dynamic discussions about the exciting SEL work that is taking place around the globe. Please join us by clicking [here](#) and contribute to the conversation by posting news and events, asking questions or sharing about your existing projects. We want to hear from you and the exciting SEL work that is taking place around the globe!

1. **Join.** If you haven't accepted the invitation to be part of the SEL SIG Facebook group, please do it!
2. **Invite others.** Please invite colleagues who are interested in the SEL field. You can do this via email (right hand side of the Facebook page, you can do several emails at once) or by sending them a link to the [SEL SIG FB group](#). The more the merrier!

3. **Engage in the conversation.** SEL SIG Officers have been sharing articles of interest on the FB group, but this is a place for all of us to share articles, current research projects, maybe ask questions to the group, etc. You can also engage by commenting on posts or liking them.

## SIG Officers and Leaders for 2015-2016

- Roisin Corcoran**, *Chair*  
John Hopkins University
- Haley Woodside-Jiron**, *Chair-Elect*  
The University of Vermont
- David Osher**, *Chair-Past*  
American Institutes for Research
- Shannon Wanless**, *Program Chair*  
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- Tashia Abry**, *Program Chair-Elect*  
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- Roisin Corcoran**, *Program Chair-Past*  
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The SEL SIG Newsletter is published twice per year—spring and fall.  
Go to [www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net) for more information about the SEL SIG #170.