

Chapter 10

Communicating Social and Emotional Needs: New Challenges for Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Emine Tunc

Harmony School of Endeavor, USA

Nausheen Hossain

Austin Community College, USA

Ambereen Haq

Austin Community College, USA

Yetkin Yildirim

Rice University, USA

ABSTRACT

Around March of 2020, the deadly virus of COVID-19 had sprung its way to various areas of the globe. It was not too long after the rise of this coronavirus that the magnitude of COVID-19 had reached so far as to have it be recognized as a global pandemic. As a result of the virus's rapid spread, numerous education institutions across the world were met with the obligation to promptly shift to virtual learning. While virtual learning has allowed students to continue their education amidst a tense atmosphere, students had and continue to face various disruptions towards their learning process and track. With a barrier towards thorough communication, students have been unable to obtain the social and emotional needs they require which has and progresses in adversely affecting their educational needs.

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INTRODUCTION

The school closures triggered by COVID-19 in early 2020 have wreaked havoc on education in ways that were unthinkable just a year ago. According to the Human Rights Watch, during the COVID-19 lockdown, approximately 55 million children under the age of 18 in the United States were obliged to continue their schooling at home, while over 1.4 billion children around the world were without child care. Students have grappled with the loss of personal interactions that once shaped their classroom experience as education has migrated from in-person to online. They've also lost access to after-school programs, which can be vital to their mental and emotional well-being, skill development, and sense of regularity, as stated by The National Academies Press. Students have also had to deal with the emotional problems of living during a terrible pandemic in this confined environment. Families have been laid off, and some kids have had to cope with the illness or death of a close relative. Children have had to adjust to uncertain and constantly changing conditions, as well as cope with increasing degrees of trauma in many cases in isolation.

It is in this context that education is expected to support both learning and the psychosocial well-being of students and educators (Anderson 2020). But education is in a precarious position, just when students need it the most. COVID-19 has put a strain on already-strapped resources, posing new issues. The epidemic has had an impact on not only student performance and conduct, but also on the economy, reducing families' ability to offer a supportive learning environment. According to previous research by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, full recovery from economic shocks seldom happens, and such shocks may result in education budget cuts, which often result in lower college enrollments and test scores. For all of these reasons, teachers face new challenges as they attempt to assess and manage the social and emotional needs of their students. But their ability to meet these needs is more critical now than ever.

WHAT EXACTLY IS SEL?

Many individuals are knowledgeable about the term "social-emotional learning," which is an important part of a child's education. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a process in which children learn to control their emotions, develop and sustain objectives, establish good relationships with others, and so on. As studied by CASEL, this specific learning experience includes a total of five skill categories. The first is self-awareness, or a student's ability to recognize and understand the emotions, thoughts, and values they encounter on a regular basis, all of which influence their conduct. The ability to take responsibility for oneself in an ordered and methodical manner is the next step in achieving SEL or, in other words, self-management. This is an important skill for everyone to learn because it contributes to a better work environment as well as self-productivity.

The third SEL-encouraged skill is social awareness. The ability to sympathize, relate to, and grasp different cultural backgrounds, cultures, ethnic customs and values, social conduct, and so on is referred to as social awareness. This is an important part of a child's mental development that can have a big impact on their emotional intelligence and how they react to change in their environment. Relationship skills are the fourth social and emotional learning competency. The ability to form relationships with people, whether close, casual, acquaintanceships, or otherwise, is extremely important for everyone since it has a significant impact on all elements of day-to-day social interactions such as cooperating, assisting others, communicating well, and much more. Responsible decision-making is the last but not least competency

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