

Chapter 5

Culturally–Responsive Social and Emotional Learning in School and Out of School

Marie Byrd

University of South Florida, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter will explore a prospective alignment of out-of-school time (OST) and in-school SEL programming to afford students of color the opportunity to develop holistically within in-school and out-of-school settings where they may be disproportionately challenged by conditions of poverty, racial/ethnic stereotyping, history of failure, educator turnover, and a culture where there has been significant pessimism about their ability to be successful in an educational environment of rigorous standards and continuous standardized assessments. A research-based dual capacity building framework will be introduced that will allow for culturally-responsive SEL efforts to be coordinated and linked to in-school academics and in OST programming. The framework will allow for culturally responsive social emotional learning development to be learned, supported, and valued in dual contexts.

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of student development and achievement has led to a continuous analysis of research-based best instructional practices that propose to positively impact student learning gains. Notwithstanding, the opportunity gap has persisted throughout the era of the standards-based learning. The scope of the public-school curriculum in the country has narrowed to those skillsets required for achievement on standardized tests in efforts to narrow the pervasive variance of student scores on standardized assessments. The narrowed curriculum, inflexible schedule and high stakes assessments do not allow for public schools to adequately sustain social-emotional character development consistently throughout K-12th grades.

Promoting and developing positive models of engagement for students of color in and out of school has the potential to enhance and improve their social and emotional learning. Additionally, develop-

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ing positive models for engagement in and out of school allows youth of color to have opportunities to develop and practice positive attitudes, dispositions, knowledge, and skills (Goggins, 2017). These non-cognitive factors are critical for ongoing academic, social and emotional success (Dweck, Walton, & Cohen, 2014). The factors of positive influence of self – efficacy beliefs about oneself, goals in school and feelings of social belonging are also critical as self-efficacy development has been shown to have a positive impact on student academic achievement (Bandura, 1990).

This chapter will explore a prospective alignment of out of school time (OST) and culturally responsive social and emotional learning (SEL) programming to afford students of color the opportunity to develop wholistically within in- school and out of school settings where they may be disproportionately challenged by conditions of poverty, racial/ethnic stereotyping, history of failure, educator turnover, and a culture where there has been significant pessimism about their ability to be successful in an educational environment of rigorous standards and continuous standardized assessments (Rothstein, 2004). A research-based dual capacity building framework will be introduced that will allow for culturally responsive SEL efforts to be coordinated and linked to in-school academics and in OST programming. The framework will allow for culturally responsive social, emotional and emotional learning to be supported and valued in dual contexts (Elias, 2009).

EARLY SEL DEVELOPMENT

SEL skills build upon one another, therefore skills must be taught early on and continue to be developed throughout the students' lives. The basic cognitive skills begin to evolve around ages 3-4, such as executive function include attention control, inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility (Jones et al., 2017). As the prefrontal cortex begins to expand around ages 4-6, skills like the ability to focus, remember, stop and think before acting, or switch between different thoughts or tasks will begin to take shape (Jones et al., 2017). This paves the way for decision-making, coping skills, and long-term planning all of which are principal competencies for adult life (Anderson, 2002; Best & Miller, 2010; Diamond, 2002). If skills are not developed in advance, the likelihood of the student being successful later in life may decline. For example, if one cannot manage their emotions and actions, they cannot resolve complex social conflicts (Osher et al., 2016; Jones & Bailey, 2015). An additional early skillset is being able to focus one's attention, control one's emotions, and manage emotions; however, one without these skills cannot plan or effectively make decisions (Jones et al., 2017).

The maturation of language skills allows children to build a better understanding of social and emotional skills (Jones et al., 2017). They will use self-talk to soothe themselves when upset, that will in turn cultivate their emotional and behavioral regulation skills (Hrabok & Kerns, 2010). Around this time, they will also begin recognizing and categorizing feelings (Jones et al., 2017). Understanding these emotions allows them to convey empathy, and steer basic social situations (Bailey & Jones, 2019; Denham & Burton, 1996). This includes self-monitoring skills, such as taking turns and sharing (Bailey & Jones, 2019; Denham & Burton, 1996). The development of social and emotional skills promotes early literacy, vocabulary, and math skills (McClelland et al., 2007). Relationships are the root of a student's SEL competency and significant to a healthy development (Jones et al., 2017). Though parental relationships are most important, teacher and peer relationships are important as students spend a lot of time with them as well (Jones et al., 2017). A safe, secure, and enriching learning space allows students to be able to pay attention, be engaged, promote self-regulation development, and mitigate trauma against

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