

Introduction

About This Book

We organized this book into three parts, each introduced through interviews with one or more experienced, charismatic educators who have walked the walk and can also talk the talk. Their voices, like the voices of the authors who contributed to each chapter, are designed to help guide the way toward application of the ideas in the book. Their advice is theoretically grounded, but very strongly based in practice, and it builds on our companion book, *EQ + IQ = Best Leadership Practices for Caring and Successful Schools* (by M. J. Elias, H. Arnold, & C. Hussey, Eds., Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003). There, educational administrators and other leaders provided firsthand accounts of how they brought social-emotional learning (SEL) and emotional intelligence (EI) into their schools in ways that built a positive climate, reduced violence and other problem behaviors, and promoted academic achievement. From Anchorage to New Haven, Minnesota to Louisiana, and California to Israel, in regular and special education settings for all age groups, administrators shared the paths they followed.

But much has happened in recent years, and many more teachers have added their voices as they have accumulated experience implementing SEL approaches in an era of strong academic accountability. Their stories are the main thrust of this book and comprise Part III. What they have to say confirms what visionary administrators knew all along: There is a fundamental connection between SEL/EI and academic performance. This connection is the focus of Part I of this book. Furthermore, SEL has become recognized as a connecting thread that provides synergy to other efforts that are of concern to every school district in which students attend and teachers teach. This is illustrated in Part II. We refer to the school's role in key areas:

- How we prepare students to become citizens and engage in service
- How we prepare students with both knowledge and character to enter the world of work
- How schools must attend to and take a comprehensive view of the health of students if they are to live up to their potentials
- How we prepare, orient and induct, nurture, and develop teachers and other educators

The most significant factors leading to school disaffection, failure, and dropout are social-emotional. When teachers leave teaching, it is much more for reasons related to student behavior, classroom and school climate, and matters of character

than it is for anything having to do with technical aspects of teaching and pedagogy. Similarly, SEL is at the root of lack of civic participation, workplace difficulty, and poor decision making about health. Meeting the complex mission of schools for academics and character requires attention to SEL in tandem with intellectual factors. The best educators, like the best parents, have known this intuitively all along. Research and practice have now caught up with intuition.

AGE GROUPS ADDRESSED BY THE MATERIALS

As you will see, there is a great deal in this book that applies to every grade level. Part I addresses the connection of SEL and academics, brain learning, and multiple intelligences from preschool through high school. Although some of the contexts in Part II are age related (e.g., school-to-work), there are implications in each that are relevant to all developmental periods. Part III, bringing SEL to classrooms, contains examples from preschool through high school, as summarized in Figure 1.

That being said, many of the program developers are continuing their action research to allow their programs to have more developmental coverage and to connect to one another in more seamless ways when they are both found in the same schools or districts in contiguous grade levels. Examples of these include the newly developed Passages programs for elementary transitions, the new Social Decision Making/Social Problem Solving materials for middle school, and the strong connections between Responsive Classroom and Open Circle and PATHS. Also worth noting is the growing application of these approaches to special education populations, whether in general

Figure 1 Age Groups Addressed by Approaches to Social-Emotional Learning and Academics in Part III

	<i>Early Childhood</i>	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
I Can Problem Solve (Chapter 10)	•	•		
Preschool Stress Relief (11)	•			
Morning Meeting/Responsive Classroom (12)		•	•	
Raising Healthy Children (13)		•	•	
Social Decision Making/Social Problem Solving (14)		•		
Open Circle (15)		•		
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (16)		•		
Second Step (17)	•	•	•	
Quest (18)		•	•	•
Going for the Goal (19)			•	•
Service Learning and Literacy (20)		•	•	
Giraffe Heroes (21)		•	•	•
Best Practices in Prevention (22)		•	•	
Teenage Health Teaching Modules (23)			•	•
Facing History and Ourselves (24)			•	•
Senior Passage Course (25)				•

education/inclusion settings or in self-contained contexts. In the *EQ + IQ* book mentioned earlier, chapters by Cohen, Ettinger, and O'Donnell (2003) and by Frank Wallace (2003) describe how their schools for children with such problems as emotional disturbances, learning impairment, autism spectrum disorders, and hyperactivity are organized around SEL/EI approaches and the integration of specific curricula of the kind mentioned in Part III. Further information on these and ongoing developments is best obtained from the Web sites listed at the end of each chapter in Part III, the Web resources listed at the end of Chapter 1, or from periodic reviews and updates provided by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) at www.CASEL.org.

PART I

The first chapter shows the powerful connection between academic success and SEL/character education. It provides an overview of social and emotional skills and the essential role they play in everyday classroom organization, climate, and management, as well as student success. Much of this chapter is based on the work of CASEL. CASEL is the preeminent organization for gathering and disseminating research, theory, and practice information regarding SEL and its application to educational contexts of all kinds. At the conclusion of Chapter 1 is a listing of essential resources for SEL, especially Web-based information that will constantly be refreshed.

Perhaps the most important of these Web listings is the CASEL Web site, www.CASEL.org. There, readers will find an online version of CASEL's *Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs*. In it, one can see a direct comparison and analysis of many SEL programs in a *Consumer Reports* format. This includes details about many of the programs in Part III of this book. CASEL's Web site will be an ongoing resource for updating information about SEL and triaging questions about resources and issues related to application, implementation, training, educator preparation, and educational policy related to SEL and academics.

Chapter 2 addresses the second fundamental connection, which is about brain research and how SEL is strongly implicated in what we are learning about learning. This chapter was specifically written for educators and illustrates in a very accessible way how we must make our pedagogy complement our physiology and the way in which SEL approaches foster this.

Chapter 3 helps us understand the grounding of SEL and EI in the broader context of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (MI). In many ways, the emergence of SEL is a recognition that two aspects of MI, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, have even more potential for general education success than perhaps was realized initially. This chapter helps readers realize that SEL is not something completely new and integrates well into Gardner's familiar and widely implemented approaches.

PART II

Chapters 4 through 9 in Part II consist of a series of brief essays that show the connection of SEL to service and citizenship, the school-to-work transition, comprehensive student health, and teacher preparation and continuing development. These

are essential concerns of every school district, and as you will see from reading these chapters, using a common SEL approach across these areas can yield benefits of synergy. SEL skills are common to all these contexts.

As the last three chapters (7–9) in Part II show clearly, teachers who themselves have strong EI skills will be better able to deal with the challenges of their job, work well with colleagues and parents, and also impart SEL skills to their students. Early reviewers of this book suggested that Rose Reissman’s chapter (Chapter 8) provides an excellent introduction to Dan Goleman’s work on EI, and so we commend it to your attention if you want a refresher. Chapters 7 through 9 address teachers at various stages of their careers, starting with college-level training and teacher induction, two critical periods in education, given what we know about the staggering rates of teacher attrition due in large part to difficulties related to the behavior and social and emotional needs of students.

Part II closes with Pam Robbins’s model (Chapter 9) for providing professional development to experienced teachers in SEL in a way that respects their professionalism and allows them to pace their own learning over time. Despite the brevity of the chapters in Part II, readers will find that the authors have made explicit suggestions about how SEL can be applied to strengthen children’s learning in each context discussed and have shared their thoughts about the most effective ways to help educators make SEL a natural and integral part of their classrooms and schools.

PART III

Part III is the heart of the book, literally. It consists of stories told by master teachers who have worked with social and emotional programs for many years, in many classrooms. Each of the stories illustrates programs with the strongest empirical and pragmatic evidence of success. Each has been written in ways that allow readers to get a genuine feeling for the program. Vignettes and sample materials and activities will allow readers to try out aspects of what they are reading. Authors also address how educators can prepare to carry out the program, how the programs are related to a building-wide climate that promotes SEL, and how programs assess their effect. The purpose of these chapters is to inspire you to give SEL approaches a try. The intent of the articles is *not* to describe every nuance of each program or approach. The specific examples of activities and lessons are intended to foster an “I can do that” attitude, and then some specific guidance to actually do it!

Programs are presented roughly in developmental order, from preschool and early elementary through high school. Some extend across elementary, middle, and high school levels. Some are quite comprehensive (e.g., Quest, Open Circle, and Second Step), whereas others are more focused on critical SEL areas at key developmental periods (e.g., Going for the Goal, Giraffe Service Learning, Teenage Health Teaching Modules, Facing History and Ourselves). Some have found important applications in both regular and special education (e.g., PATHS, Best Practices in Prevention, Social Decision Making/Social Problem Solving). Some border on not being programs as much as ways to reorganize learning (Responsive Classroom, Raising Healthy Children, Senior Passage). In actuality, virtually all of these programs *do* transform the teaching and learning process in the classroom. They change relationships in the classroom and use emotions and problem solving constructively in the service of academic and social learning and application to everyday life.

READER'S APPLICATION/REFLECTION GUIDE

To help you bring the content of Part III into your educational practice, we have created a reproducible Reader's Application/Reflection Guide (see Figure 2). It serves as an organizer so that as you read, you will be able to consider the following to help you try out ideas from the chapter:

Figure 2 Reader's Application/Reflection Guide

As you read through each chapter of Part III, you may find it useful to print out this page and consider the following questions to help you put ideas from each chapter into practice:

1. Visualize what this program would look like in your classroom.
2. Reflect on how this is similar to or different from your current practice.
3. Write down two or three specific ideas you can apply from this chapter most readily.
4. Ask a question for the developers/authors to clarify, extend your understanding, obtain more examples, and so forth, using the contact information at the end of the chapter and at www.CASEL.org.

We have found that this approach leads to less re-reading and also allows you to take ideas you are reading, bring them into practice quickly, and refine them through dialogue with others who have "walked the talk."

REFERENCES

- Cohen, M., Ettinger, B., & O'Donnell, T. (2003). The Children's Institute Model for building the social-emotional skills of students in special education: A schoolwide approach. In M. J. Elias, H. Arnold, & C. S. Hussey (Eds.), *EQ + IQ = Best leadership practice for caring and successful schools* (pp. 124–141). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Wallace, F. (2003). Social-emotional learning at North Country School: Resourcefulness, ruggedness, and resilience. In M. J. Elias, H. Arnold, & C. S. Hussey (Eds.), *EQ + IQ = Best leadership practice for caring and successful schools* (pp. 142–153). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.