

## Scaffolding the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) of Intellectually Gifted Children: The CASEL Approach. Dr Susen Smith . Email: [Susen.smith@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Susen.smith@unsw.edu.au)

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### SCAFFOLDING:

- **high-quality relationships supports** resilience development in gifted students;
- **like-interest/ability peers in acceleration & extra-curricular provisions increases** well-being, self-esteem, academic achievement, friendships of gifted learners;
- **SEL can hinder or prevent many negative influences of affective concerns;**
- **SEL can enrich social-emotional development;**
- **should lead to student empowerment.**

**Scaffolding Self-awareness:** (understand own emotions, values, strengths, limitations, & challenges (CASEL 2013).

#### Characteristics & needs:

- Don't really understand what giftedness is or its ramifications (Galbraith & Delisle 2011).
- Don't always know themselves & their strengths (Cross 2005).

#### Strategies:

- Teach students to know themselves, their capabilities, strengths, & possibilities for learning (Cross 2005).
- **Concept-mapping** on self, strengths/weaknesses.
- **Problem-based service learning** engages in community focused projects (Terry, 2008).
- Addresses interests & abstract thinking processes, increases responsibility, supports empathy & reflective judgment.
- **Passion projects = empathetic expression & compassion** for altruistic outcomes (Cash 2011).

#### Characteristics:

- Heightened awareness of differences between themselves & their more typical peers (Shechtman & Silektor 2012), but may not know enough to handle possible difficulties (Galbraith & Delisle 2011).

#### Strategies:

- **Projects on 'exploring giftedness'** may assist understanding differences with peers.
- **Student voice/expression** (Chandra Handa 2009; Kanevsky, 2019; Terry 2008).
- Encouraging students to identify their own SEL limitations & needs expedites self-advocacy (Cross 2005).
- **Facilitated dialogue**, bibliotherapy.
- **Journaling.**
- **Creative Arts/expression.**

**Scaffolding Self-management:** (to self-regulate their emotions & behaviours by managing stress, increasing motivation, & learning goal setting (CASEL 2013).

#### Characteristics:

- May have unhealthy perfectionist traits i.e., procrastinating, having difficulty making decisions, rejecting challenges if they lack buoyancy, not accepting mistakes, being dissatisfied with outcomes if they do not meet their own stringent expectations, being self-critical & critical of others, expressing frustrations inappropriately, being highly competitive, or having difficult relationships due to high expectations of peers (Bond 2013).

#### Strategies:

- Learning positive perfectionism traits balances negativities.
- Reinforce acceptance of weaknesses & strengths & being able to manage behaviours.
- Self-monitoring their own progress helps students to develop positive perfectionism (Christopher & Shewmaker 2010).
- Affective curriculum motivates academic, social, & emotional development (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2006).
- Teaching self-regulation skills to design & implement projects successfully & complete assignments effectively (Cash 2011).
- Consistent practice with increasingly challenging tasks & goals for buoyancy development (Gross 2010; Martin 2012).

#### Characteristics:

- Taking risks helps in overcoming fear of failure & can lead to academic achievement (Gross 2010).
- A safe classroom environment provides opportunities for healthy challenges to reduce frustrations, & for taking small risks and building up to larger risks (Landis & Reschley 2013).

#### Strategies:

- Acknowledge **positive outcomes of risks;**
- identify **relevant personal goals** to work towards (Bond 2013).
- Positive personal best (PB) goals i.e., setting goals to meet or exceed a previous best performance or effort Enables students to make learning choices, is intrinsically motivating, and reduces internal emotional conflicts (Martin 2012).
- PB goals helps to develop self-control in decision-making, self-regulatory processes, skills in monitoring emotions, self-efficacy, higher expectations, & greater achievement and well-being (Morisano & Shore 2010).

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**Scaffolding Social Awareness:** (to empathetically understand others, by expressing empathy, acknowledging ethical norms, & recognising supportive resources (CASEL 2013).

**Characteristics:**

- Strong affective memory & deep thought processes in advanced responses, i.e., extreme emotions, complex interrelationships, asking provocative questions, restlessness, or feel heightened fear or anxiety (Harper 2013; Piechowski 2008).
- Greater capacity to feel more empathetic towards others (e.g., Harper 2013; Piechowski 2008; Shechtman & Silektor 2012).

**Strategies:**

- **These feelings can motivate** self-actualisation, advanced cognitive functioning, & their affective capacity for conceptualising problems, which can translate into solutions to society's injustices, e.g., passion projects (Smith & Laura 2009).
- **Allow to show concern for others** & respond sensitivity to other's needs (Gross 2010).
- **Biographies addressing ethical issues.**
- **Opportunities for empathetic expression e.g., charities, cultural celebrations, debate.**

**Characteristics:**

- The more advanced the intellect = greater Emotional Intensity (EI)(Gross 2010).
- EI can engender heightened curiosity, vivid fantasies, self-criticism, & having problems adapting to change = lack of self-confidence, inappropriate behaviours, or misguided social exchanges (Piechowski 2008; Shechtman & Silektor 2012; Smith & Laura 2009).

**Strategies:**

- Emotional intensity (EI) is often confused with behaviour disorders or learning difficulties & reflected in misdiagnoses or missed identification (Webb et al., 2005).
- **Accurate identification/multiple processes** for diversity.
- **Group-based pastoral care programs** enables dealing with distress of academic pressure, exam stress, competition, increased workload, & procrastination (North et al., 2015).

**Scaffolding Responsible Decision-making:** (to make constructive, ethical, personal, social, and safe choices for collective well-being (CASEL, 2013).

**Characteristics:**

- Intellectually Gifted Students (IGS) have exceptional, insightful, & efficient use of creative thinking processes for acquiring new knowledge or solving problems innovatively and quickly (Sternberg 2012).
- Many IGS creatively express myriad intellectual & social & emotional energies with sophisticated moral & ethical responses (Piechowski 2008).

**Strategies:**

- Have superior metacognitive processing skills (Bannister-Tyrrell et al. 2014). Can make decision-making easier, more efficient, and more strategic for gifted, & able to monitor their decision-making processes & amend strategies to achieve more positive outcomes (Ball et al., 1994).
- High metacognition suggests decision-making for gifted also has motivational, social, or emotional ramifications.
- **Significant others can moderate decision-making**, e.g., combined with their metacognitive awareness, moral characteristics, & ethical considerations, IGS generally make considered choices & responsible decisions that are respectful of their peers.
- **Teach decision-making processes.**
- **Engage students in the classroom decision-making processes. Empower students within the curriculum** (Hoffman, 2003; Kanevsky, 2019; Smith, 2017).

**Scaffolding Relationship Skills:** (to engage in positive relationships, by building connections with constructive communication, collaboration, & negotiated conflict (CASEL 2013).

**Characteristics & needs:**

- Interrelationships between emotions & intellect have profound effects on IGS who may be more emotionally aware (Geake 2009).
- High-quality relationships support resilience (Luthar 2006).
- Resiliency needed to deal with the depth of emotions in relationships (Geake 2009).

**Strategies:**

- **Scaffold resiliency:** role-modelling messages; positive self-talk; using adversity to lead to positive outcomes; practising using internal & external emotional experiences; communicating resiliency attitudes; nurturing social relationships through role-play & social skills programs (Luthar (2006).

**Characteristics & needs:**

- Emotional distress or social disengagement, can occur if gifted students remain in inappropriate learning environments with curriculum or instruction that are poorly matched to their individual needs & peers they don't relate to (Gross 2010; North et al. 2015; Plunkett & Kronborg 2007).

**Strategies:**

- **Subject/grade acceleration** can provide intellectual challenge, friendship-building, remediating social difficulties to enable interaction with cognitively, socially, & emotionally equal peers (Assouline et al. 2015; Dare et al. 2016; Maher & Geeves 2014).
- Acceleration reduces disengagement, developing emotional or behavioural problems, or underachievement (Blaas 2014; Gross 2010; Maher & Geeves 2014).
- Aim for **differentiated instruction combined with social acceptance within the accelerated contexts** (Assouline et al. 2015; Chandra Handa, 2009; Jung et al., 2011).

**Characteristics:**

- Express their moral concerns at a younger age.
- Use higher levels of prosocial moral reasoning & empathy.
- Higher the intellect, higher the moral obligations, emotional intensity, sensitivity, & empathy combined (Hay et al., 2007).

**Strategies:**

- Teach moral reasoning processes, ethical thinking, & decision-making with real-life problem solving (Sternberg, 2012) with explicit instruction that rationalises immorality & social injustice issues (Prykaza, 2013).
- Kohlberg's discussions of moral dilemmas (Maker & Schiever 2010).
- Creative drama programs to increase moral judgment (Bencik-Kangal et al., 2013).
- 'Teaching for Intellectual & Emotional Learning' (TIEL) program endorses amalgamating teaching critical thinking skills & SEL (Folsom, 2011).

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