



Social emotional learning: Tapping into Algerian middle school EFL students' decision-making and goal-directed behaviour

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Abstract

Developing students' cognitive and social-emotional competencies is essential for fostering effective classroom engagement and lifelong learning. Yet, few studies have explored how structured socio-emotional learning programs influence decision-making and goal-directed behavior among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This study examined the effect of the Strong Kids Curriculum on enhancing cognitive competencies, particularly decision-making and goal-directed behavior, among middle school EFL students. A quasi-experimental design was employed involving 21 participants drawn from a larger group of 218 students. The study utilized the Strong Kids Knowledge Test, Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener, Devereux Student Strengths Assessment, and the Strong Kids Implementation Fidelity Checklist. Findings revealed that participation in the Strong Kids Curriculum improved students' decision-making abilities, while changes in goal-directed behavior were less evident. Additionally, students demonstrated notable progress in social-emotional knowledge, supported by consistent program implementation. The study highlights the potential of structured socio-emotional learning interventions in promoting students' cognitive and emotional development, suggesting that integrating such programs into language education can strengthen learners' adaptive problem-solving and academic resilience.

Keywords: Cognitive competence; decision-making; goal-directed behavior; socio-emotional learning; Strong Kids Curriculum.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Moving from the primary school to the middle school frequently engenders serious psychological challenges in which young learners find themselves stuck with assumptions that are no longer deemed adequate for the individuals they have become. As a consequence, they tend to feel misplaced and insecure about their identity. Some learners may hide behind the shield of an extremely self-isolating attitude, some turn to have a perfectionist inclination and develop a sort of negative perception towards themselves, while others simply disguise themselves in the suit of rebel teenagers. All these aspects are commonly accompanied by a decrease in academic outcomes and sometimes with medically unexplained corporal distress (Masten et al., 2005). Hence, middle schools that represent a perfect ground for supplying continuous prevention and intervention services have recently shown a growing interest in addressing social comfort and emotional security as core constituents of learners' well-being and psychological health, in which individuals' cognitive, emotional, and social development is inserted as part of their study programs (Coelho et al., 2025; Hosokawa et al., 2024).

Recently, approaches to education have begun to advocate a more nuanced view concerning the efficiency of integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) principles in improving schooling quality in general; the step that succeeded in entrenching SEL as a widely embraced permanent framework rather than just a transient educational fad (Martinsone et al., 2022). Nevertheless, little focus has been placed on how SEL affects non-native English language learners' performance so far.

1.1. Literature review

During the last decades, there has been a great expansion of interest in SEL not only as an alternative to reward and punishment-based systems that have shown their deficiency in schools, but also after the traditional educational strategies often used for teaching different school subjects, including foreign languages (Crone et al., 2010). In fact, many researchers succeeded in establishing correlations between well-implemented SEL programming in schools and positive social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes (Weissberg et al., 2015). This paved the way for its implementation as an effective bio-psychosocial program to take place and to be highly advocated.

The early beginning of the SEL framework can be traced back to Gardner's (2011) concepts of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, in addition to Sternberg's (1985) early perception of the notion of practical intelligence. In fact, both contributions have proved to be a turning point in the fields of social sciences and psychology. In the same vein, both Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis which focused on the crucial role of negative emotions in L2 learning and the early works of Goleman (1995), who asserted that emotional quotient (EQ) can be more important than the intelligence quotient (IQ) as a factor of a productive life, highlighted the necessity of addressing students' affective aspect in educational settings. This also coincided with the first trials of SEL programming in public schools by Weissberg & Shriver (1996), basically assisting in the prevention of young people's growing mental health crisis at that time via imparting the skills of empathy and dignity. Research has proven that such programs or trainings have helped in fortifying the mental states of students (Romano et al., 2025). The project received opposition from conservatives in many American states. Yet, soon after 1994, SEL was broadly presented as a multidisciplinary approach to learning, along with the first formal definitions attributed to the emotional competence concept. Simultaneously, Salovey and Mayer (1990) suggested that emotional competence is the capacity to pay attention to one's own and others' feelings, to distinguish between them, and to utilize this knowledge to inform and direct one's own thoughts and behavior. As a matter of fact, the definition shaped the basic reference to SEL's five main pillars, including self and social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Other ambitious works like that of Weissberg et al., (2015) also succeeded in identifying components of learners' emotional competence as a capacity that can be taught as part of a structured curriculum or a schoolwide approach, or even as an element of post-school activities.

Today, SEL is a field that correlates cognitive and affective elements to help learners succeed in school and life. Indeed, SEL as a set of abilities that enables learners to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems, and establish positive relationships with others, is attributed to a wider set of positive outcomes including: fewer absences, greater trust and respect for teachers, a better sense of community, enhanced coping with school stressors, lower rate of conduct problems and increased metacognition skills associated with a better nonverbal reasoning and a significant enhancement in math, language arts, and social studies skills (Zins & Elias, 2007).

1.1.1. SEL and language learning

Learning a foreign language is a nerve-wracking task, and managing emotions in environments where students struggle to understand a foreign language is a stressful activity. With the absence of the required verbal skills to express ideas and participate effectively in classroom activities, English language learners are more likely to experience an academic delay compared to other learners, as they tend to face the challenge of developing essential skills to communicate appropriately in class.

The foreign language classroom differs from other classrooms since its nature requires intensive interaction and communication between learners and teachers (Debreli, 2019). When they learn foreign languages, learners usually experience various adverse feelings such as enjoyment, anxiety, boredom, shame, pride, and anger (Pishghadam et al., 2016), and the classroom environment often determines the way every type of these emotions can be handled (Castro et al., 2025). In fact, learners as the makers of meaning through language are actually at the center of the aforementioned constructivist approaches to English language instruction; therefore, they need to concentrate primarily on boosting their activity, engagement, positivity, negotiation, communication, and reflection. Relatedly, several affective variables have been found to facilitate or obstruct the process of second language acquisition, including self-assurance, empathy, risk-taking, and unwillingness (Ellis, 1997; Lightbown, 2000). Students, in fact, require developing a real emotional link to what they learn in addition to a sense of personal relevance to what they receive in the classroom. When young learners do not feel connected to EFL class routines, their grades could drop, and they become troubled and unlikely to attain any of the expected educational goals. Conversely, happy and socially competent individuals usually tend to be more productive in class and society as well. Some studies have revealed that the process of developing emotional intelligence triggers smoother second/foreign Language learning as it stimulates productive thought, reasonable performance, increased decision-making, motivation, and planning (Downey et al., 2008). It has also been found that this process helps in achieving an overall language learning success (Gregersen et al., 2014; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; Murphey, 2014). Moreover, positive emotions were proven to have an impact on boosting concentration, fluency, and learning, as cognition and emotions are found to be indivisible (Swain, 2013).

SEL focuses on the active techniques that aim at developing attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions and consequently shapes the traits of a socially, emotionally, and academically healthy student. Correspondingly, the challenge for educators is to provide adequate opportunities for learners to enhance both their cognitive and non-cognitive competencies. However, devoting SEL curricula to assist middle school learners' academic progress and meet these finalities in Algeria can be considered as partially disregarded, even though such initiatives can offer a supportive ground for learners to overcome the diverse hardships they often encounter when learning English. The purpose of the current study is to examine the impact of implementing the Strong Kids curriculum in an Algerian EFL middle-level class on students' cognitive competencies, precisely decision-making and goal-directed behavior.

1.1.2. Strong kids curriculum

Strong Kids is an evidence-based SEL curriculum that provides a set of engaging multisensory activities for children aged 11-14 years. It is both a prevention and early intervention program for children who are at risk of social-emotional problems or struggling with social and emotional difficulties in general and special education classrooms (Carrizales-Engelmann et al., 2016). Aligned with the three interlinked cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies, the program affords a myriad of strategies to deal with the

difficulties teenagers often encounter at this age, majorly social relationship complexities, intense emotional and romantic feelings, irritability, loss of self-concept, and depression (Carrizales-Engelmann et al., 2016).

Strong Kids showed a significant impact in improving knowledge of social-emotional concepts and skills (Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012; Isava, 2006; Merrell et al., 2008; & Gueldner, 2007). Additionally, the program demonstrated a decline in overall antisocial behavior along with significant improvements in peer relationships, self-management/ compliance abilities, and academic skills, in addition to a minor improvement in hostile, antisocial, and disruptive behaviors (Isava, 2006). On another hand, learners' awareness of appropriate social-emotional behaviors, their self-reported positive social-emotional skills, and teachers' acceptance of the Strong Kids curriculum all showed favorable benefits (Nakayama, 2008). Other studies of the Strong Kids series, grades 3–12, have shown increases in emotion knowledge, reductions in negative emotions (Merrell et al., 2008), and a decrease in internalizing behaviors for middle school students (Caldarella et al., 2019; Neth et al., 2020).

1.2. Purpose of study

The current study evaluates the implementation efficacy of an SEL curriculum, Strong Kids (Merrell et al., 2008), as a universal prevention curriculum on third-year middle school EFL students' competencies. The curriculum showed a significant impact in improving knowledge of social-emotional concepts and skills (Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012; Isava, 2006; Merrell et al., 2008; & Gueldner, 2007), a decline in overall antisocial behavior, along with significant improvements in peer relationships, self-management/ compliance abilities, and academic skills, in addition to an improvement in hostile, antisocial, and disruptive behaviors (Isava, 2006). The current study is among the few that investigate the impact of implementing Strong Kids in Algerian middle school classes. To fulfill this aim, three specific questions were addressed:

1. What effects does the Strong Kids curriculum have on middle school EFL students' decision-making competence?
2. What effects does the Strong Kids curriculum have on middle school EFL students' goal-directed behavior competence?
3. Does the Strong Kids curriculum affect students' social-emotional knowledge?

We hypothesize that Strong Kids implementation ameliorates middle school EFL students' decision-making and goal-directed behavior competencies. We also hypothesize that the Strong Kids curriculum enhances students' social-emotional knowledge.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Participants

This study used a quasi-experimental design, and the curriculum was implemented in a suburban public middle school located in an eastern state of Algeria. SEL intervention framework suggests a three-tiered implementation model: Tier 1: Core classroom instruction, Tier 2: Targeted small group instruction, and Tier 3: Intensive individual intervention; therefore, the study focused on a specific category of students: eighth-grade students aged 13, due to their low academic records and reluctance towards learning English.

The total population of the school was 218 students, and the study included only one class of 21 eighth graders (ten males, eleven females) out of the three classes for a Tier 2 /Targeted small group instruction. The participants are native speakers of Arabic and have studied English for two years; many of them have been categorized as socially, academically, and emotionally at-risk according to the results of the Social Academic Emotional Risk Screener (SAEBRS) (Kilgus et al., 2015). Almost all students came from low-income families that have difficult life situations. Most of the students had limited parental supervision, which engendered inappropriate behaviors at the level of the school. Additionally, the last discussions made by the district's principal supervisor with the school council's members demonstrated that most of the respondents showed obstructing hesitation and anxiety in regard to English language learning in particular.

2.2. Procedure

The researcher teacher taught the curriculum lessons throughout a sequence of twelve successive weekly sessions. The implementation process does not require any training or specific qualifications, as the Strong Kids Curriculum manual suggests. Parents received an overview of the curriculum with a consent request on which they gave approval for, including their kids in the program after checking the content. At the outset, the teacher added a set of modifications to the last version of the curriculum (Carrizales-Engelmann et al., 2016), the modifications included the size of Assignments, scripts' language, supplements, and scenarios that were partially adjusted to meet the level of the Algerian learners. In this vein, a focus group was set up. After piloting the first three modified lessons, the group validated the final version of the curriculum. For ethical purposes and to not make discriminatory choices, the implementer completed the Social Academic Emotional Risk Screener (SAEBRS) to select the class that would receive the intervention; the results provided necessary data about the three eighth-grade classes the teacher was in charge of. Thus, the class that included the largest number of at-risk students (62%) was the one selected to receive the intervention.

2.3. Data collection instruments

The curriculum was given as a targeted small group instruction (tier2 intervention), a pretest and posttest that included DESSA (LeBuffe et al., 2009), which is a multi-items norm-referenced behavior rating scale that measures social and emotional skills that can operate as a protective factor for kids and adolescents (see appendix D), and Strong Kids Knowledge test which includes 20 items presented in multiple choice and true/false forms (see appendix B).

Tests were administered one month before implementing the program. The teacher completed the pretest one month before the intervention and the posttest a month after the last Strong Kids lesson. ANOVA was used as a variance test to determine if a statistically significant difference exists between decision-making (DM) pretest and posttest T-scores, whereas Mann Mann-Whitney Test was used with goal-directed behavior (GB), as the normality of GB T-scores was not achieved. Because the variables were measured at only two time points (Pretest and Posttest) as DESSA scoring directions indicate (See table 1), Student's t-Test was used to check the significance of the change in students' knowledge scores. The statistical tests were performed using R (R Core Team, 2013).

Table 1

DESSA Variance Testing Model

Pretest/Posttest Comparison	Time 1 T-Score	Time 2 T-Score	Outcome		
			Significantly Worse	No Change	Significantly Better
Goal-Directed Behavior					
Decision-Making					

2.3.1. Dependent and independent variables

The study builds its arguments on two variables: Strong Kids curriculum implementation and the enhancement of a set of Algerian EFL middle school learners' cognitive competences. The dependent variable of this study was two of the students' major cognitive competences: decision-making and goal-directed behavior, which were specifically measured using DESSA.

2.3.2.. Implementation fidelity

The twelve lessons were taught each Tuesday morning and lasted 30–40 minutes each, except for the eighth lesson, which lasted seventy minutes and was split into two sub-sessions to enable the students to have more practice on the target notions. Each lesson was succeeded by homework, which enabled the teacher to check the students' understanding and involvement. A bulletin was sent home with students at the end of each lesson, explaining to parents what was taught to reinforce the skills at home. The teacher used the Teacher's Notes Form suggested by the program founders to record field notes regularly. For fidelity purposes, another English teacher attended the lessons and recorded continuous remarks on the program's Basic Fidelity Checklist. The recorded number of lessons that were fully completed was 12

sessions (100%) out of the total number of planned/intended sessions. The fidelity checkers noted that the executor completed 100% of the lessons' components except for the eighth lesson, with an execution rate of 90%. This was due to the omission of some sections that included only brief reviews of the previous lessons.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Social, academic, and emotional behavior risk screener (SAEBRS)

SAEBRS results showed that all three classes included several at-risk students; 62% of the students in class 1 manifested risk signs. Meanwhile, a percentage of 48% in class 2 and only 39% in class 3 demonstrated an at-risk total behavior. Correspondingly, class 1 (the most endangered) was selected to receive the intervention (see Table 2).

Table 2
SAEBRS Results According to Class

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Risk Rate	62%	48%	39%

3.2. Knowledge Test

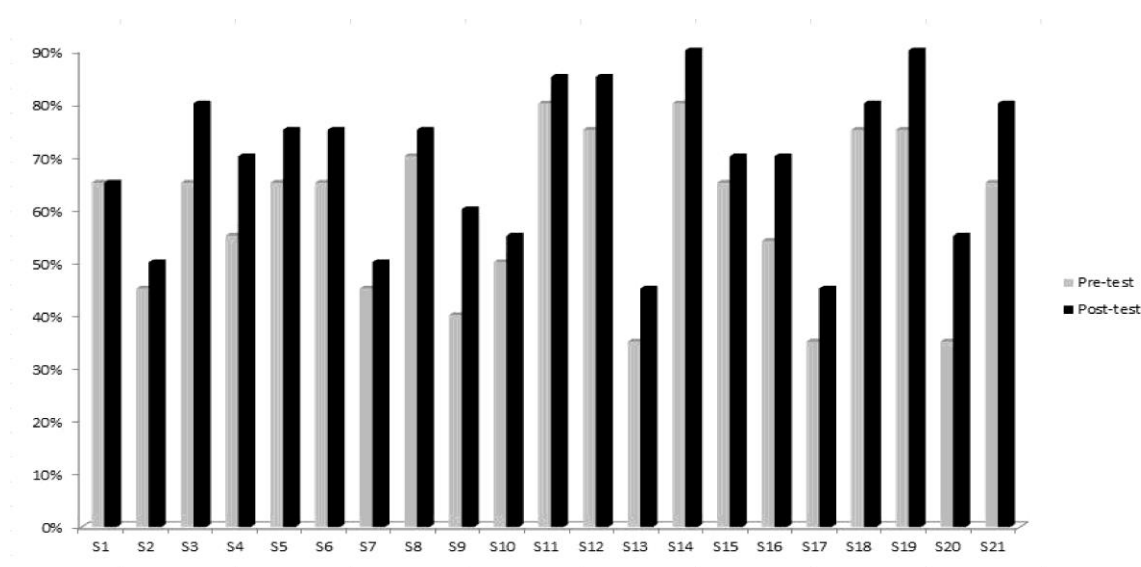
Results of Student's t-test showed a highly significant change in students' knowledge: $p < 0.05$ (< 0.0001). (See Table 3/ Figure 1)

Table 3
Students' t-test Knowledge Test Results

Table Analyzed	Data 1
P value	< 0.0001
Significantly different ($P < 0.05$)?	Yes

Figure 1

Variance in Social-Emotional Knowledge Students' (S) Results According to Treatment Time (pre/post treatment)



3.3. Decision making and goal-directed behavior

Results of ANOVA indicated a highly significant statistical difference between pretest and posttest T-scores of decision-making competence that were previously recorded using DESSA screener: $p < 0.05$ (< 0.0001). (See Table 4)

Table 4

Decision-making sum of squares analysis

Source	D				
	DL	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Pr > F
Treat time	1	859.524	859.524	26.055	< 0.0001

Results of the Mann-Whitney Test indicated a non-significant change between goal-directed behavior pretest and posttest T-scores that were previously recorded using DESSA screener $p > 0,05$. (See Table 5)

Table 5

Mann-Whitney bilateral test /goal-directed behavior results according to treatment time

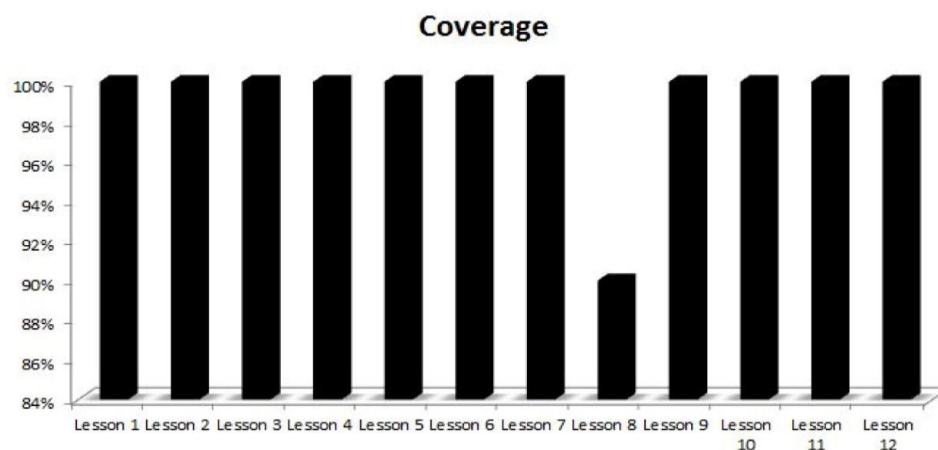
U	150.500
Expected value	220.500
Variance (U)	1577.689
p-value (bilateral)	0.079
Alpha	0.05

3.4. Implementation fidelity

The recorded number of lessons that were fully completed was 12 sessions (100%) out of the total number of program sessions. The fidelity checkers also noted that the executor completed 90% of the components of the eighth lesson and 100% of the components of the remaining eleven lessons; this constitutes a high degree of implementation integrity. (See Figure 2)

Figure 2

Lessons' coverage/implementation fidelity results



4. DISCUSSION

The aforementioned results suggest that the implementation of the Strong Kids curriculum may strengthen one of the most congruent competencies of emotional intelligence, which is decision-making among EFL middle school learners after the successful accomplishment of introducing a twelve-lesson instruction at $p < 0,05$ (<0.0001). Aligned with the findings of (Basu & Mermillod, 2011), the findings bolster the claim that emotional intelligence helps students think more constructively and perform reasonably, including decision-making and planning capabilities (Downey et al., 2008). As Strong Kids provides the learners with the possibility to better recognize and control their feelings in accordance with societal norms, the results align with the previous studies that proved that people who are aware of their own emotions and do not let them interfere with their decision-making are better able to handle life situations (Chauhan, 2006). Moreover, emotional intelligence practices have demonstrated effectiveness in assisting decision

makers in improving their capacity to assess the emotional consequences of their choices, which increases the possibility of a better decision-making process (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011). Instructions in Strong Kids, such as mindfulness strategies including calming and refocusing, are also believed to have a relationship with higher-order thinking skills that improve decision-making (Hardgrove & Lenowitz, 2019).

Therefore, Strong Kids might help in preparing EFL learners' minds to handle challenging decisions as the emotional intelligence practices may provide a basis for succeeding and flourishing in a variety of life contexts, such as daily communication, academic integration, stress management, and personal growth, and may reduce the likelihood of being constrained by indecision both in and out of the school context. In relation to emotional intelligence, Strong Kids might contribute to increasing the potential of language learning success, including a better performance in the specific classroom tasks that are considered in this study, such as following the example of a positive role model, showing good judgment, seeking advice, and showing the ability to decide between right and wrong.

Acknowledging the fact that language learning as a social process requires students' active contribution to attain their goals, SEL curricula are designed to offer essential goal-related learning by optimizing better goal setting and achievement through helping students shift their goal strategies in light of the results of their earlier attempts in class. In this vein, emotional intelligence was proven to positively influence goal-oriented behaviors and attitudes towards foreign language learning (Oz et al., 2015). However, the improvement in goal-directed behavior in this study was not considerable, which suggests that the curriculum may not be equally effective for all types of cognitive competencies. Although the teacher recorded an enhancement in students' initiation and persistence in completing tasks of varying difficulty after the intervention, the Mann-Whitney test's results indicated that this slight change is insignificant p-value of 0.079 ($P > 0.05$). This is unsurprising because observing many of the target behaviors, like showing creativity in completing a task and seeking out additional knowledge or information, is not easily done, and improvements might be easily disregarded.

It is also possible that the time allotted for recording the posttest scores is insufficient, since many items, like working hard on projects and asking to take on additional work or responsibilities, may not be immediately visible to teachers and need more time to be noticed in the class. Another explanation for the study's results is that the goal-directed behavior T-scores of 9 out of the 21 students (43%) were ranked as typical (40-60) at pretest times; the curriculum then may have served a preventive function, as T-scores did not get worse and showed a slight increase.

In light of the obtained results, it is worth mentioning that extending the duration of the program in order to reinforce the target skills through including ongoing remedial instruction or scheduling follow-up sessions might yield more significant results. As Goal-directed behavior is more complex and multifaceted than other skills, devoting a prolonged post-intervention observational period could provide a clearer picture of the curriculum's implementation outcomes. Yet, this can minimize the credibility of results since the study design included only one group.

Student's t-test results showed a highly significant increase in the students' social-emotional knowledge ($p < 0.0001$), supporting the findings of numerous previous studies, such as Nakayama (2008); Marchant et al., (2010). Moreover, the implementation integrity was high since the fidelity checkers noted a regular execution of the instruction that covered 100% of the lessons and 90-100% of the content's components, which adds more credibility to the results of the study.

5. CONCLUSION

The task of understanding and responding to Algerian students' mental needs for the sake of boosting their academic achievement in different school subjects, mainly English, is quite challenging. Many students need wise and specialized care that can be provided through considering the value of adding the social-emotional construct to their curriculum. Based on the obtained findings that suggest diverse useful implications for EFL teachers in Algeria, the Strong Kids curriculum may be effective in increasing learners' social-emotional knowledge and decision-making competence. The results also suggested that the teacher

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was able to execute Strong Kids with fidelity.

As this study contributes to the expanding body of literature that shows SEL to be a successful strategy for raising students' academic achievement, the present findings inspire instructors to keep looking for better approaches that help them advance in understanding young learners' socio-affective development in order to prevent all sorts of academic underachievement. A larger sample size and a follow-up plan could be included in future investigations. Moreover, giving specific attention to additional elements, including gender, language skills performance, teachers' training, family and social backgrounds, would be important. It would also be relevant to involve other educational levels, such as primary and secondary classes, for a better generalization of findings.

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Conflict of interest: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Ethical Approval: The study adheres to the ethical guidelines for conducting research.

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Appendix A: SAEBRS Scales and Associated Items

Social Behaviour	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Arguing				
Cooperation with peers				
Temper outbursts				
Disruptive behaviour				
Polite and socially appropriate...				
Impulsiveness				

Academic Behaviour	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Interest in academic topics				
Preparedness for instruction				
Production of acceptable work				
Difficulty working independently				
Distractedness				
Academic engagement				

Emotional Behaviour	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Sadness				
Fearfulness				
Adaptable to change Positive attitude				
Worry				
Difficulty rebounding from setbacks				
Withdrawal				

Appendix B: Strong Kids Knowledge Test/Part A

Cross « true » or « false »:

1-Clenched fists and shaking hands can be a signal to stop and use strategies to solve a problem.



True

False

2- Emotions feel the same for everyone.



True

False

3-Stress can be caused by comparing yourself to others because you think they are better than you.



True

False

4-The way you show your feelings can change depending on: who we are, with who (friend, family, strangers...) or where we are (school, house, street...)

True

False

5-Feeling uncomfortable is normal and to be expected.



6-There are physical feelings that True False happen with emotions.



True False

Appendix C: Strong Kids Knowledge Test/Part B

Choose the right answer:

7-An example of an uncomfortable emotion:

a-Hopeful b-Frustrated c-Curious d-Excited

8-What is an emotion?

a-A thought you have about a situation.

b-Your inner voice inside your head.

c-A memory you have about something happened to you.

d-A feeling that tells you something about a situation.

9-Self talk can be a way to calm down after you get angry, you tell yourself:



a-I don't deserve this.

b-I should get angry.

c-I can work through this.

d-I hope I never see this person again.

10-Which of the following statements best describes « empathy »?



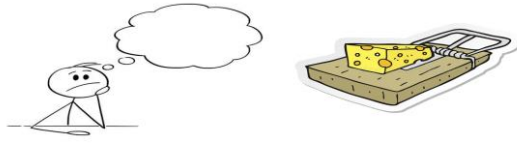
a-Knowing how you feel.

b-Not knowing why your friend is feeling sad.

c-Understanding how your friend feels based on your experience.

d-Wanting another person to feel better soon.

11-Your thoughts can become traps when:



a-You see things in a way that is unhelpful.

b-You see both the good and the bad in each situation.

c-You think something different from your friend.

d-You think about how another person might think.

12-Reframing is a way to:



a-Make new friends.

b-Think about how you can ignore the situation.

c-Think about a situation differently.

d-Make someone gets in trouble for what he has done.

13-Why would you want to know how someone else is feeling?

a-So you can leave that person alone when he is angry.

b-To better understand and support him.

c-Tell other people about that person.

d-To act the same when you are together.

14-Conflict resolution is best described as:



a-Discussing a problem until there is a winner or loser.

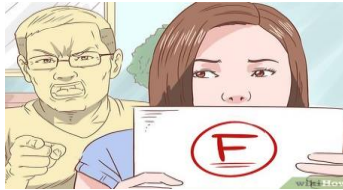
b-Arguing with another person until he sees that you are right.

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c-Problem solving so you can reach an agreement that is respectful and responsible for all.

d-Talking about the problem until something changes the other person's mind.

15-Which of the following is a positive or helpful way to handle being anxious to show your bad marks to your parents.



a-Tell them you are anxious and you will work harder next time.

b-Hide your paper and hope they forget about it.

c-Be sad and angry with yourself and stay alone in your room.

d-Say that your bad grades are because of your friends.

16-Which of the following is helpful to deal with a problem when you are feeling sad?

a-Cry quietly.

b-Talk about your problem with someone you trust (a friend, your teacher,.....).

c-Through things around.

d-Ignore the problem.

17-Which of the following is helpful to handle your emotions in class when your friend's talking annoys you?

a-Yell at your friend and say "Stop ! ».

b-Tell the teacher about this.

c-Stare at him until he knows you are annoyed.

d-Stop and breathe deeply.

18-If you are feeling tired and you are having a hard time in enjoying your life, you can:

a-Eat healthy b-Get more sleep c-Spend time outside d-Any of the above

19-When you set goals, which of the following is not an important part of SMART goals?

a-Specific b-Timely c-Abstract d-Measurable

20-Your friend seems upset; you want to show him that you care about what he feels. The helpful way to do this is:

a-Talk about something completely different that happened to you to change the subject.

b-Listen and show that you are paying attention.

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c-Talk about something else.

d-Look away and don't say anything.

Appendix D: Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) Scales and Associated Items

Goal-Directed Behavior: A child's initiation and persistence in completing tasks of varying difficulty.

Keep trying when unsuccessful?	Do things independently?
Take steps to achieve goals?	Ask to take on additional work or responsibilities?
Try to do her/his best?	Show creativity in completing a task?
Seek out additional knowledge or information?	Seek out challenging tasks?
Take an active role in learning?	Work hard on projects?

Decision Making: A child's approach to problem solving that involves learning from others and from her/his own previous experiences, using her/his values to guide her/his action, and accepting responsibility for her/his decisions.

Follow the example of a positive role model?	Learn from experience?
Accept responsibility for what she/he did?	Follow the advice of a trusted adult?
Show good judgment?	Show the ability to decide between right and wrong?
Seek advice?	Use available resources (people or objects) to solve a problem?