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## The Effect of QuaverSEL on Preschool Students

Kinsley Heckart

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**The Effect of QuaverSEL Intervention on Preschool Students**

Kinsley Heckart

Northwestern College

An Action Research Project Presented  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Education

### **Abstract**

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has become a growing concern and topic in education as students have faced unprecedented times since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. COVID-19 increased several mental health conditions and decreased critical social-emotional skills. The school where this action research took place implemented a new SEL curriculum called QuaverSEL to better address student needs. The participants in this study included two preschool classrooms, with six students aged 3- to 5-years-old. The study took place over four weeks, and interventions took place in 10-15 minute sessions two times a week. Data was collected before and after the implementation of QuaverSEL. The study found that there was an overall increase in specific skills students lacked before the intervention, and the intervention had an overall positive effect on students' social-emotional skills.

*Keywords; social-emotional learning, QuaverSEL, social-emotional intervention, preschool, social-emotional skills*

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### **The Effect of QuaverSEL Intervention on Preschool Students**

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States in 2020, children's social and emotional well-being was negatively affected. Children and teachers had to navigate school closures and virtual learning, which led to a lack of social interactions and emotional struggles. The need for social-emotional learning (SEL) is at an all-time high, but not every state has adopted its own social-emotional standards or pushed the need for SEL learning in school systems. More than 20 states have adopted their own SEL standards, and all 50 states have adopted SEL standards in pre-kindergarten classrooms (CASEL, n.d.). When the pandemic hit, 30-40% of young students were negatively impacted by their mental or social-emotional health, especially among marginalized students (Hamilton & Gross, 2021). Cultural implications and biases toward students of different backgrounds have been found in SEL. One study noted that SEL programming and measuring might be culturally biased due to social justice and equity implications when students were asked in a questionnaire if they feel that it is acceptable to express their emotions (Thomas et al., 2021). This action research evaluates how SEL is implemented in early childhood education programs and how it has led to better classroom environments, social-emotional well-being, and later success in life. The problem is that when students cannot develop critical social-emotional skills, it leads to detrimental effects and can predict poor future outcomes such as education, employment, criminal activity, mental health, and substance abuse (Jones et al., 2015).

This action research aims to evaluate how SEL programming has been adopted in a preschool setting an elementary school in Texas and how interventions affect those who have a greater need for social-emotional skills. Evaluating how SEL programming and intervention can help students meet SEL competencies and the effectiveness of new programming has been vital

in this action research. The elementary school where this study takes place has adopted a new SEL program called QuaverSEL, partnered with Conscious Discipline in the preschool setting. The knowledge gained from this action research project further proves how important SEL is and how it can be implemented in the classroom. Even if there is no set SEL program in schools, SEL strategies can still be implemented to help in every teaching environment. Another purpose of this action research is to help those who have not yet met SEL competencies and give them critical interventions to meet those competencies. Early prosocial skills can be an indicator for adult outcomes later in life, and preschool interventions can help childhood noncognitive skills in a long-lasting way (Jones et al., 2015).

The research studies included in this action research were peer-reviewed journals and articles located in Northwestern College's De Witt Library and on Google Scholar. All research is current within the last ten years. Overall, the key findings positively demonstrated why SEL is crucial and needed in schools. Limitations, however, included the time needed to adopt SEL programs, cost of SEL programs, and lack of SEL implementation at a state or school level. Inclusion in this literature review was based on The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and the five competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision making. CASEL has been at the founding forefront of SEL standards and how to teach SEL in schools. School-based SEL interventions addressed these different competencies and were found to increase interpersonal and intrapersonal tools that helped children navigate through various stages of their lives (Ura et al., 2020). Other inclusion criteria included specific SEL strategies such as role-playing or real examples, how to assess SEL, school-wide implementation, and how to use SEL in schools effectively.

The principal finding of implementing and successfully using SEL and SEL interventions shows that they positively increase social skills, improve academic achievement, promote a safe and inclusive environment, and overall help the emotional and social well-being of children. Most SEL programs in the preschool setting used evidence-based practices of identifying instruction, rehearsal, and feedback, and, overall, effectively helped teachers implement SEL in the classroom (White et al. 2017). When we address how intervention can help preschool students meet SEL competencies, it is essential to conduct pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments to determine effectiveness and highlight areas in need of more intensive intervention (Ura et al., 2020). Using multiple means of assessment is an essential factor for allowing numerous competencies within CASEL to be addressed. This also shows how adopting a new SEL program is practical. Multiple means of assessment can be observations targeting based on the social skills being taught, measuring multiple SEL competencies, and skills-based assessment of SEL intervention being conducted. Another essential component is how SEL is addressed and SEL skills are implemented. Interventions implemented with preschools have shown improved outcomes in cognitive, social, and economic domains and a higher rate of return in the children's lifetimes (Murano et al., 2020). Furthermore, at-risk students also showed a decrease in problematic behaviors. When students are given early intervention, their success will carry on with them throughout their lifetime.

This literature review examined the history of social-emotional learning and how the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) implemented evidence-based SEL practices from preschool through high school education. CASEL first implemented SEL in schools and set the stage for other states to follow and adopt their own SEL standards. Next, this literature review will explore the implementation and need for SEL in schools

nationwide and in Texas. Texas has not adopted its own SEL standards beyond the preschool level, but it has implemented SEL in other ways. SEL might only be adopted at certain schools in the state. Finally, the benefits of SEL will be explored, along with what current research says. Research has shown positives to SEL, but there are also limitations, including a lack of time and money to implement SEL in schools.

## **Review of the Literature**

### **History of Social-Emotional Learning**

Social-emotional learning (SEL), as defined by The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), is the process in which children can apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to set goals, manage their own emotions, make decisions, and maintain positive relationships (Ng & Bull, 2018). CASEL has five primary SEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012). CASEL was established in 1994 and set the stage for SEL in America today. More than 20 states have adopted their own SEL standards, and all 50 states have established pre-kindergarten SEL standards (CASEL, n.d.)

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, schools turned to online learning, which was tied to negative emotions, social stress, and decreased attention focus in students (Raffaele et al., 2021). A research study by Raffaele et al. (2021) conducted at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic found that negative mood, social stress, and attention focus are related to attention performance, which negatively impacted academics when distance learning started (Raffaele et al., 2021). Some students fell further behind emotionally and academically as they had to shift to online learning, where the future of the next school year was unknown. Similarly, Hamilton and



Gross (2021) found that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, anxiety and depression increased in students, with marginalized students more likely to experience these adverse effects. In contrast, Hamilton and Gross (2021) argued that students with disabilities were disproportioned, with little to no evidence to support the impact of students aged five to ten and no direct data on how the pandemic accurately affected the students social-emotional development. Their study found that students aged 13 to 19 reported they were concerned for their own emotional health, and 40% reported negative impacts on their ability to concentrate, make decisions, and feel happy (Hamilton & Gross, 2021). In other words, further research and measurements are needed to accurately reflect how the pandemic has affected students' social-emotional well-being.

### **Importance of Social-Emotional Learning**

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has been proven to improve students' academic learning, mental health, behavioral outcomes, and classroom climate in schools everywhere (Bailey et al., 2019). SEL is especially important for lower-income students or students who have faced trauma in their lives. Bailey et al. (2019) discovered that implementing social-emotional lessons in the classroom led to increases in students' self-esteem and decreased conflicts in the classroom; teachers found it easy to implement SEL in everyday lessons and enjoyed the flexibility of SEL strategies. However, some SEL curricula can also be hard to implement, lack flexibility, and not be evidence-based. When initiating and implementing SEL, it is crucial for teachers and the school to be on board, have a proper understanding of SEL and its competencies, and have investment and time put into it (Marsh & Kennedy, 2020). Implementing the SEL curriculum is difficult without understanding social-emotional learning and its importance to schools. Social-emotional learning must also be a district and schoolwide initiative.

The social-emotional curriculum has been adopted at the preschool level in all 50 states and implemented into the everyday preschool setting. Typical SEL programs take place in a Tier 1 approach which is geared toward the whole class, but interventions can also be effective in developing social and emotional skills in students who need them the most. A meta-analysis study by Murano et al. (2020) found that with universal interventions, there were minor to medium effects on social-emotional skills; targeted interventions showed medium effects for the development of social-emotional skills and medium effects on reduction of problem behaviors. Overall, social-emotional learning is highly needed, but best practices for students will differ from a preschool level to a K-12 level.

Studies have found that early social-emotional functioning in a kindergarten setting can be a future indicator for adult outcomes in employment, criminal activity, mental health, substance abuse, and education (Jones et al., 2015). Jones et al. (2020) measured teacher-assessed prosocial skills which were later indicators of different adult outcomes and human development, and how those with low prosocial skills such as aggression would be involved in later crime outcomes. In a similar study by Shaack et al. (2019), there was a positive association between advanced content in math and ELA and no negative associations between advanced content and social-emotional skills. Shaack et al. (2019) also found that when students are exposed to advanced academics, it leads to better approaches to learning, better focus, and better interpersonal skills. Stearns (2018) argued that there is no space for negative effects and difficult feelings, such as aggression and excitement, in a preschool setting, and how working through these feelings allows for creativity and learning experiences.

### **Social-Emotional Learning Strategies**

Many teachers are faced with questions on how social-emotional learning can be implemented, how to measure social-emotional skills, or even where to begin. With more push for state social-emotional learning standards and an increase in resources for SEL, the implementation of SEL has become more accessible. Kirk and MacCallum (2017) found that one kindergarten teacher promoted teacher-child relationships with problem setting and solving, role-playing by children and teacher-guided experiences, and by promoting a safe environment. The kindergarten teacher in this study was the only one out of eight teachers who sought out teaching moments in children's play and scaffolded these moments to children's understanding (Kirk & MacCallum, 2017). Similar findings by White et al. (2017) found that effective social-emotional learning programs included rehearsal and feedback, problem-solving, instructional procedures, and relaxation techniques when teaching self-regulation strategies. Self-regulation strategies can include deep breathing and self-talk phrases.

Teachers' beliefs in SEL and implementation also play an important role when implementing SEL strategies. Blewitt et al. (2020) found that teachers' beliefs and experiences can directly influence their ability to support children's social-emotional development. Responsive caregiving looks at an educator's ability to read and respond to children's cues, and when teachers have strong emotional support, it leads to promising findings in students' social-emotional outcomes (Blewitt et al., 2020). Effective social-emotional professional learning can help students' own social-emotional growth when implemented with fidelity. In contrast, Zinsler et al. (2014) found that high school and middle school teachers believed parents should be primarily responsible for children's emotional development. Zinsler et al. (2014) also found that teachers' beliefs and experience with implementing SEL can differ and impact how SEL is implemented into everyday curriculum and activities. In conclusion, many social-emotional

learning strategies can be used daily in the classroom and are essential for students' social-emotional growth.

### **Past Research on Social-Emotional Learning**

Past research on social-emotional learning has shown that social-emotional learning is positive and meaningful, as well as what needs to happen to implement SEL in schools. The intervention this research study used was QuaverSEL. Elliot (2021) studied the efficacy of Quaver and found that there was significantly more growth in the QuaverSEL treatment group than in those that were in the control group. Elliot (2021) also found an increase in self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making skills throughout the 14–16-week study that averaged 30-60 minutes per week, with instruction occurring 1-2 days per week. A similar study done by Wong et al. (2014) evaluated social-emotional programming in primary school students with social and emotional management difficulties. Wong et al. (2014) discovered that the treatment plan with a six-session SEL program improved the participants' social-emotional skills in dealing with anxiety and identifying emotions in themselves and others. Problem behaviors also decreased.

Thayer et al. (2019) discovered that Second Step, a social-emotional learning curriculum, effectively reduced challenging behaviors but did not boost well-being in other groups. Most students exhibited positive changes, even if only minor. Overall, Second Step can reduce problematic behavior but not promote well-being.

A study done by Whitmore et al. (2019) evaluated social-emotional learning in a naturalistic setting by documenting and interpreting photographs through visual learning analysis. Through visual learning analysis, the researchers were able to divulge multiple

meanings when students were engaged in social-emotional learning, along with how photographs show students' social-emotional learning. Children explored and made reflections on their own, made choices, and the pictures showed that the children made authentic connections (Whitmore et al. 2019).

## **Methodology**

### **Research Questions**

This action research aimed to study the effect of social-emotional learning in a preschool classroom. The school where this action research takes place has implemented a new curriculum called QuaverSEL alongside another SEL program called Conscious Discipline. The main research question that inspired this action research is if implementing QuaverSEL interventions in an early childhood setting can help students with low SEL skills grow. This research helps teachers see how crucial SEL skills are in both an early intervention setting and other grade levels. Teachers will also learn how to quickly implement SEL lessons into their classrooms every day.

### **Setting**

This action research study took place in a preschool elementary education classroom in a large suburb of northern Houston, Texas. This district in Texas currently contains 38 campuses with 26 elementary schools, seven 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade middle schools, and five 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade high schools. The participants in this study are six preschool-aged children in two preschool classrooms. In both preschool classrooms, there are two teachers and two classroom paraeducators. The elementary school where this action research took place has a population of over 700 students from preschool to fifth grade. The elementary school is predominantly African

American and Hispanic, with only 3% of students being Caucasian. Over 90% of students are economically disadvantaged. It is also a Title 1 school.

### **Participants**

Two preschool classrooms were used in this action research. Four students were from one classroom, and two were from the other. Each class typically contains 19-21 students. No students have 504s or IEPs, and there are no ELL students. Six preschool-aged children were included in this study. Students were identified for inclusion by their preschool teacher as having exhibited lower social skills and needing SEL skills in the classroom. Four of the students were male and two were female. All students in this study are from diverse backgrounds and were equally respected, so cultural bias does not occur.

### **Variables**

The focus of this study was to determine if the implementation of QuaverSEL intervention increased SEL skills and decreased negative behaviors exhibited by the students. Specifically, self-management and relationship skills were worked on after pre-intervention data was collected. Interventions took place in a small group setting with no more than three students per group. The independent variable within this study was using QuaverSEL as an intervention for students who showed a need for social-emotional learning skills. The dependent variable was measured using observational data from the Children's Listening Institute (CLI) Circle Progress Monitoring system: Social and Emotional Checklist before and after implementation of QuaverSEL. Qualitative and quantitative data were mixed in this study. Qualitative data allowed the researcher to see the benefit of social-emotional instruction. Collecting quantitative data allowed the researcher to break down areas of concern and compare pre-and post-implementation data.

**Intervention**

The intervention being tested in this study was QuaverSEL. QuaverSEL is directly aligned with Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) competencies and uses music to empower the taught social-emotional learning skills. The school where this action research took place implements QuaverSEL every morning with fidelity; it also occurs daily with reflection at the end of the day. The intervention used by the researcher occurred two times per week in 10–15-minute sessions with the six participants in a small group setting. The researcher picked lessons for this intervention that were tested by using the pre-intervention data. All participants in this study showed struggles in self-management and relationship skills, two of the five CASEL competencies. Lessons in this study focused on listening skills and why listening is essential, rules, making friends, working as a team, and how to get to know others.

**Research Design**

Previously, students in this preschool setting solely used a social-emotional learning program called Conscious Discipline. However, as the 2021-22 school year started, teachers were trained and taught about a new daily social-emotional learning curriculum called QuaverSEL. The researcher has also received training on QuaverSEL and worked closely with the two preschool teachers to implement the intervention group within their classrooms during centers time. The researcher chose the two areas to be worked on by using observational data collected using the same tool that the preschool teachers use to measure their student's social-emotional growth at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The two preschool teachers looked through previous data and used their own observations to choose the six participants in this study who showed low social-emotional skills and needed further intervention.

After pre-intervention data was collected, the intervention group started as the participants were identified and selected. The researcher aimed to answer the question, “Will the participant's social-emotional skills show growth after implementing QuaverSEL interventions?” The researcher implemented interventions two times per week in 10–15-minute increments over three weeks. During this time, students completed activities after each lesson and used the songs used in the lessons to retain what was being taught. One activity done was an emotional journal activity where students had to draw how they were feeling each day after the intervention was taught.

### **Data Collection**

The focus of this action research project was to determine if social-emotional interventions can improve social-emotional skills in preschool students. While daily social-emotional learning occurred, the researcher began a 3-week intervention group with the six participants. Intervention groups occurred for 10-15 minutes twice a week for three weeks. Observational data was collected using the CLI Circle Progress Monitoring system: Social and Emotional Checklist before and after the intervention. The data collection process took place during the week of February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. Students were observed for four days, totaling 10 hours of observation in all. Students were observed in their natural settings and evaluated in different areas including positive interactions with peers, respecting classroom materials, following classroom rules, cleaning up after the task is done, and more. The checklist included 29 items covering positive social behaviors, classroom community and safety, emotion and behavior regulation, self-care, and approaches to learning. Each area was marked as emerging, developing, or proficient. Validity for this tool was first established using the Social and Emotional Skills Checklist (SES-C) via a comparison of teacher reports to similar measurement



tools (Landry et al., 2014). Strong correlations occurred between the SES-C and the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation, which has 80 items and is used explicitly for preschool-age children, successfully validated in studies in various countries (Landry et al., 2014).

Post-intervention data was collected in the same manner as the pre-intervention data. Observation hours remained the same and totaled 10 hours over three days of observation in both preschool classrooms. Observations took place on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>, as the interventions were still being taught on March 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Pre- and post-intervention data used the CLI Circle Progress Monitoring System: Social and Emotional Checklist, and both were then compared to see if growth had occurred. Pre- and post-intervention data was stored safely and securely in a spreadsheet on the researcher's computer.

### **IRB Approval**

The application for the Educational Practice Exemption was reviewed and approved by Dr. Theresa Pedersen on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## **Findings**

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher is a certified teacher with two years of experience in the classroom. The researcher collected data prior to implementing the social emotional learning intervention in the classroom and after the intervention was completed. The social-emotional learning curriculum used was QuaverSEL, which was implemented by the researcher for four consecutive weeks, happening twice weekly in sessions lasting 10-15 minutes each. Each session took place in small group settings with no more than four students per group.

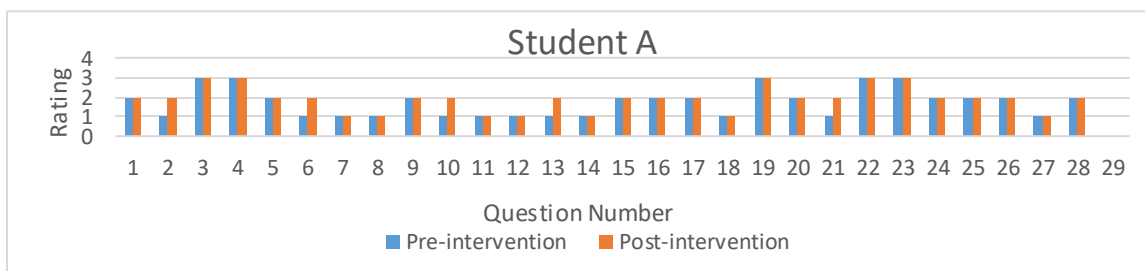
Pre- and post-intervention data were collected using the Circle Progress Monitoring System: Social and Emotional Checklist. The checklist used in this study is used by the

preschool teachers three times a year to track social-emotional growth in preschool students. The checklist contains 29 components in five areas: positive social behaviors, classroom community and safety, emotion and behavior regulation, self-care, and approaches to learning. Six students were used in the research study and were labeled Student A, B, C, D, E, and F. Students were scored from 0-to 3 (0) Not observed, (1) Emerging – the child never or rarely demonstrates the behavior, (2) Developing – the child sometimes demonstrates the behavior, but it is inconsistent or requires assistance, (3) Proficient – the child consistently demonstrates the behavior (CLI, n.d.). All data collected in this study was done in an observational setting.

The checklist items that the participants were observed with consistently showed struggles in multiple areas. Typical areas included complying with redirections, talking to and interacting positively with peers, solving conflicts with peers, following classroom rules, and concentrating when working on a task. In contrast, there were many areas in which the participants consistently showed strengths. These strengths included using good hygiene, taking pride in accomplishments, dressing, toileting without help, and using emotional words to describe feelings.

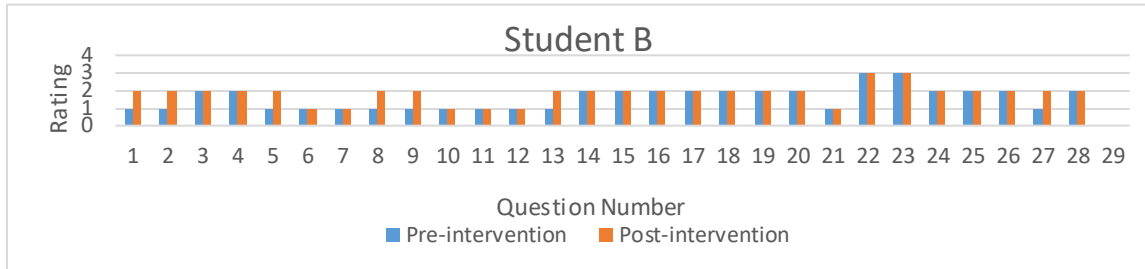
Pre-intervention data showed a need for self-management and relationship skills and guided the researcher's targeted intervention groups. Ideally, after intervention took place, an increase in these areas or others would be evident.

**Figure 1**



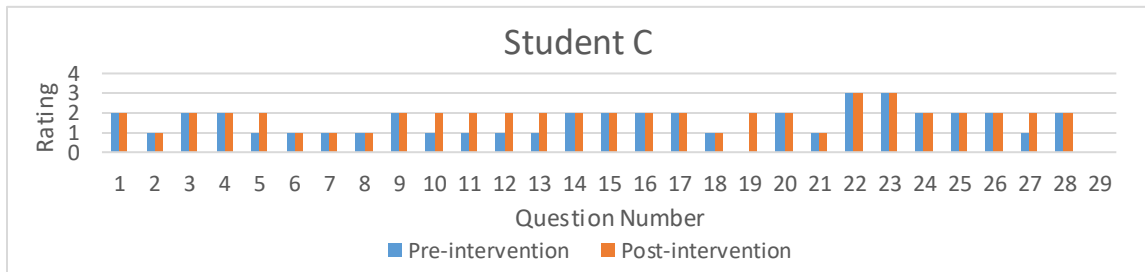
Student A (*see figure 1*) showed an increase in comforting peers in need, taking care of classroom materials, and saying excuse me instead of interrupting others.

**Figure 2**



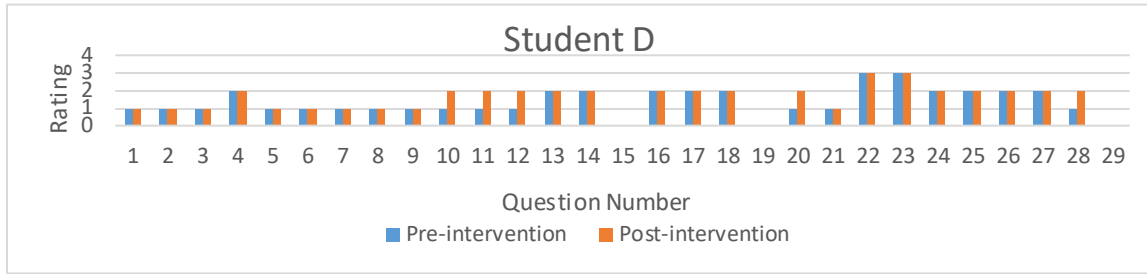
Student B (*see figure 2*) increased in talking to peers and adults positively, sharing materials with peers, asking adults for help when they could not resolve conflicts, accepting compromise from others, using classroom materials appropriately, and concentrating when working with classroom materials.

**Figure 3**



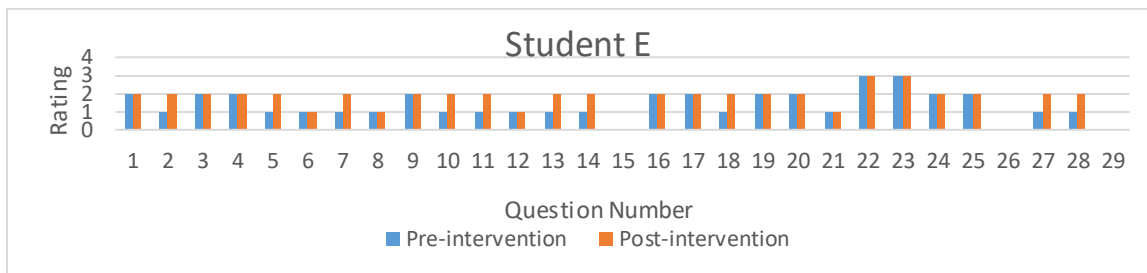
Student C (*see figure 3*) increased in sharing materials, following classroom rules, following two and three-step directions, complying when redirected by adults, using classroom materials appropriately, taking pride in their own accomplishments, and concentrating on working with classroom materials.

**Figure 4**



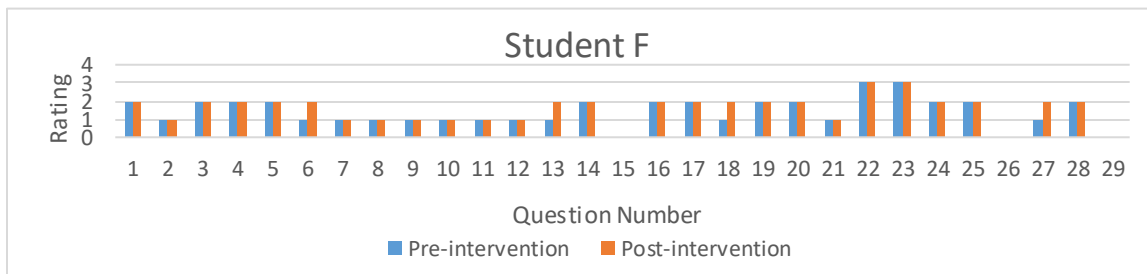
Student D (*see figure 4*) increased in following classroom rules, following two and three-step directions, complying when redirected by adults, expressing oneself without harming others, and sticking with challenging tasks.

**Figure 5**



Student E (*see figure 5*) increased in sharing materials with peers, solving conflicts with peers, taking care of classroom materials, respecting others' space, waiting for their turn in an activity, concentrating on work, and sticking to challenging tasks.

**Figure 6**



Student F (*see figure 6*) increased in comforting peers in need, taking care of classroom materials, waiting for their turn in activity, and concentrating when working with classroom materials.

There are fundamental differences and improvements to note upon pre-and post-intervention data analysis. Some students showed more significant social-emotional growth, while others only showed some social-emotional growth. Overall, growth was shown, proving the importance of social-emotional interventions. Student A increased in three areas, Student B increased in five areas, Student C increased in seven areas, Student D increased in five areas, Student E increased in seven areas, and Student F increased in four areas, as noted above. The most significant areas of improvement seen from participants in this study were in concentration when working with classroom materials, following classroom rules, following two to three-step instructions, and complying when redirected by adults. Student C and Student E were the students who improved the most, whereas Student A only increased in three areas.

## **Discussion**

### **Summary of Major Findings**

This action research study aimed to answer the question: Does QuaverSEL intervention help preschool-aged children increase social-emotional growth? Data collection took place before and after implementing the QuaverSEL intervention using the Circle Progress Monitoring: Social-Emotional Checklist. The intervention took place for four weeks in a small group setting for 10-15 minutes each session. Interventions were targeted based on pre-intervention data in self-management and relationship skills. Of nine areas that each participant struggled in, there were positive outcomes in multiple areas. A tremendous increase was seen in

the ability to concentrate when working with classroom materials, with four out of six participants showing growth. Two out of six participants increased in assisting and comforting others in need, following classroom and school rules, following two and three-step instructions, and complying when redirected by adults. Teachers within the preschool classrooms also noted a positive effect on the classroom environment. Although each participant showed growth, there was still minimal improvement with Student A. Student A only improved in three areas, whereas the other students increased in four or more areas. With the implementation of QuaverSEL, social-emotional growth has taken place. More significant growth can occur with continued implementation. For the remainder of the 2021-22 academic year, small group social-emotional learning intervention groups will be taking place to help these students who lack social-emotional skills.

This action research demonstrates the potential impact on future learning and teaching when implementing Quavers EL to increase social-emotional growth, even for a short amount of time. Teachers can implement a number of free resources related to social-emotional learning if there is no social-emotional curriculum in the classroom. Teachers can also target interventions groups with data collected throughout the year and work on one social-emotional competency at a time. Implementing social-emotional skills can be as easy as identifying emotions and having students learn strategies to regulate emotions. One activity used in this action research study was an emotion journal students did daily to identify what emotion they were feeling and draw a picture about it.

This action research supports the literature review showing that social-emotional learning can improve social-emotional growth in students. Even though the data showed little growth for some students, each student has different abilities and backgrounds that can benefit from

implementing social-emotional interventions in the classroom. However, overall social-emotional growth varies from student to student and can be impacted by absences, school vacations, weather delays, etc. Social-emotional success and outcomes can be indicators of future student success. Early intervention is critical and can truly help all students, regardless of age.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One limitation of this study was that Student A was gone for two sessions, which could have impeded their growth and explained why little to no growth occurred. The student made those sessions up upon their return to school. There was also a one-week break between interventions, as spring break occurred near the end of this study. A delay in implementation and routine could have caused learned skills to recede or be forgotten while away for a week, and a lack of consistency occurred. As soon as interventions occurred after spring break and review was implemented, learned social-emotional skills and lessons were retaught. Another limitation to the study was that one day of sessions was missed and made up due to a weather delay that caused a lack of routine and schedule during the standard intervention small group time. In addition to weather-related delays and absences, one other student was gone for a week while the researcher was collecting pre-intervention data and had to be added the following week after the groups had already started, once they were caught up on previous lessons.

### **Further Study**

This action research has further proven that social-skills intervention and implementation are essential and can genuinely improve social-emotional growth in preschool-aged children. A more extended implementation period would be necessary if this research were conducted again.

Other tools of data collection would also be beneficial, such as having more than one data collection to measure the students' social-emotional growth over time. Future study could track social-emotional growth from grade to grade or for a full academic year. This study was done in a short period, and if given a more ample opportunity to implement the intervention, more reliable and valid data would be shown. If the social-emotional skills of the group remain low, students would benefit from QuaverSEL intervention groups. Further study could also examine the role of parental involvement in continuing the social-emotional skill being taught in school at home. Parental involvement and questionnaires can also be conducted in future studies to get more background knowledge on the students that showed low social-emotional skills. Although only two of five CASEL competencies were taught in this study, using all five and measuring each competency would strengthen future research.

### **Conclusion**

Social-emotional learning is a relatively new area of implementation in schools, and a greater need for social-emotional learning is needed. The COVID-19 pandemic, which started in 2020, strongly affected social-emotional growth and skills in children of all ages. Depression and anxiety began to rise as a new uncertain future was thrown at children everywhere and students were faced with online learning. Low social-emotional prosocial skills in students have been a future indicator of life in poverty, crime, and unemployment. Early intervention is key to success with students that struggle emotionally and socially. Starting social-emotional learning and teaching critical skills in a preschool setting leads to many benefits, including better classroom environments, peer-to-peer relationships, and less problematic behavior. However, social-emotional competencies are hard to measure due to a lack of measurements available. District-wide and school-wide, there has also been a lack of funding, training, and dedication to



implementing a social-emotional curriculum. Implementing social-emotional learning in the classroom can simply start with having students identify emotions and learn regulation strategies to regulate their emotions. Implementing social-emotional intervention to a small group of students has led to increasing wanted behaviors and decreasing unwanted behaviors in the classroom. Even with one student making only a little progress, little progress is better than none, and vital social-emotional skills were learned and implemented daily in the classroom. Teachers noted that the students were better at resolving conflict with peers and following through on adult redirections instead of ignoring a redirection. Research has also shown that when students' social-emotional needs are met, this also reflects positively on academic improvement. Overall, this action research shows the need for social-emotional learning in the classroom and how social-emotional learning is particularly crucial for schools with early intervention in mind.

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