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THE YOUNG FOUNDATION

Developing skills for life and work

Accelerating social and emotional learning across South Australia

A Young Foundation report with The Australian Centre for Social Innovation and the Foundation for Young Australians

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Contents

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Summary

Recent years have seen significant shifts in the world of work, with the focus moving away from industry, towards innovation and the 'knowledge economy'. At the same time, the global economic slowdown has meant fewer labour market opportunities, particularly for young people. Consequently, young people today enter a world of unparalleled uncertainty and risk, with the most marginalised and vulnerable facing the greatest threat.

The majority of young people in South Australia continue to thrive, with lower than average youth unemployment, and a well-performing school system. But for a significant proportion of young people, the transition from school to further education and especially to the workplace, remains challenging. Efforts to improve formal qualifications and work-based training have been redoubled in response, but there is also a growing consensus that more must be done to build the 'softer' skills which employers say are increasingly important in getting on at work.

These skills include discipline, and the ability to interact with adults, to take feedback, to deal with setbacks and more. The Young Foundation refers to these competencies as 'SEED skills':

- S for social and emotional competencies
- E for enterprise, creativity and innovation
- E for emotional resilience
- D for discipline

And South Australian employers are not alone in demanding them. Across the developed world, employers report frustrations that all too often young people are ill-prepared for life in the workplace. The consequence for young people is often a struggle to find meaningful or lasting employment. Governments too acknowledge that these skills are not just useful for the workplace but help to build cohesive communities with active citizens playing a role in civic life.

The school system in South Australia recognises the importance of social and emotional competencies, and learning approaches that support their development. It has responded by putting in place frameworks and curricula to build these competencies among young people, such as the new South Australian Certificate for Education (SACE). With this groundwork already complete, South Australia is now well placed to experiment with other initiatives to really grow these skill sets in young people. Opportunities present themselves to work further with groups of young people who remain on the margins of learning and work, to build an evidence base of what is working locally and to roll out exemplar schemes more widely.

In this paper we explore the evidence for the importance of a greater emphasis on social and emotional learning, as part of a holistic view of young people's education. We look firstly to the trends in the field globally, and in Australia and South Australia specifically, highlighting the need for new approaches.

Secondly, we examine the rise in the importance of SEED skills among the education and academic communities, outlining the evidence for how social and emotional competencies improve the outcomes both for individuals and for society and communities.

Next we consider how these competencies can most effectively be nurtured to prepare young people for safe and successful transitions to work, by considering where current systems fail (for example, through fragmented programmes and multiple competing programmes) and where others succeed (for example, through strong leadership and a clear evidence base).

Fourthly, we explore 12 examples from the UK, USA and Australia where young people are flourishing as a result of investment in social and emotional learning programmes. We have intentionally drawn from a full spectrum of examples from one-off initiatives or pilots, through to curricula and national initiatives, in order to demonstrate the range of future options open to the South Australian Government.

Finally, we conclude by considering how South Australia could do more to systematically create the five conditions which accelerate improvement in young people's social and emotional competencies. This will involve building on much of the good practice already in play in the state, but also seizing the opportunities available to accelerate these efforts by providing better measuring tools, new professional development opportunities and wider accountability for outcomes.

We also note the opportunity to expand the narrative around SEED skills to include empowering the young person in his or her learning and working journeys. South Australia needs confident and skilled young people, who can navigate their individual paths, make choices that will benefit their long-term outcomes in learning and work, and critically, who can bounce back from failures and setbacks.

There is a moment of opportunity here – as the evidence for SEED skills comes together and the first round of the new SACE students graduate – to firmly commit the state to remaining a pioneer in the push for social and emotional learning as best preparation for life and work.

Introduction

The world of work is changing, shifting from industry towards the service and public sectors, science and technology innovations and the 'knowledge economy'. The recent global economic slowdown has reduced the number of opportunities available, with young people disproportionately affected. There is now growing concern for a 'lost' or 'untapped' generation, particularly those young people who are vulnerable or marginalised from learning and work. The world which our young people enter into today is one of uncertainty and risk, and social inequality is cemented as those who cannot count on support networks or resources are disproportionally affected.

Against this backdrop however, the majority of young people in South Australia are thriving. Youth unemployment is low by international standards, and the school system performs well in general. For a significant proportion of young people though, the transition from school to further education and especially to the workplace remains challenging. In 2011, just over half of school leavers aged 15 to 19 in South Australia (51 per cent) were not in full-time education, representing a significant gain on the previous year. Additionally, the percentage of this age group who were not in full-time employment fell from 19 to almost 15 per cent in 2011[1].

Some groups – particularly young people from Indigenous communities, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and those living in remote or rural areas – continue to be less likely than their peers to experience safe and successful transitions from learning into work. Research has long linked fractured transitions during adolescence to poor outcomes across the lifecourse, affecting later employment, earning potential, mental wellbeing, and civic engagement. Such social exclusion is likely to be perpetuated as young people become parents themselves.

In response, there has been significant investment from the South Australian Government in initiatives to improve academic achievement and retention, develop work-based training, and increase the numbers of young people remaining in learning to the end of compulsory education and beyond. Many of these initiatives have been targeted at the most disadvantaged learners. However, despite these interventions, patterns of disadvantage and disengagement among young South Australians have not significantly shifted over recent years, and employers continue to raise concerns that there is a mismatch between the demands of the modern workplace, and the skills of young people leaving formal education. This is felt to be the case even where there is a commitment to the importance of social and emotional learning:

> "Most schools have got a pretty good charter and commitment to addressing the social and emotional skills. Where we probably fall short is creating that linkage to the career development component of student learning." [2]

As globalisation moves industrial jobs away from developed countries, 'employability' relies ever more heavily not only on literacy, numeracy and technical skills, but on skills and qualities such as negotiation, adaptability, and enterprise. These are the skills most necessary within expanding service sectors.

There is a lack of clarity around the definition of these social and emotional skills (also described as 'competencies') and the terrain is full of competing and sometimes confusing labels. For example, they can be described as both 'soft' skills and 'non-cognitive' skills. For simplicity, the Young Foundation has suggested the division of these social and emotional competencies into four clusters, making up the acronym SEED:[3]

- 'S' is for social and emotional competencies that include self-awareness, social awareness and social skills.
- 'E' is for emotional resilience – the ability to cope with shocks or rebuffs that may be short- or long-term.
- 'E' is for enterprise, innovation and creativity – the ability to shape situations, imagine alternatives, remain open to new ideas, problem-solve and work in teams.
- 'D' is for discipline – both inner discipline to defer gratification and pursue goals, as well as the ability to cope with external discipline.

Despite the fact that definitions of social-emotional skills or competencies differ, there is a consensus around their importance in the context of employability. Similarly, evidence increasingly suggests that these competencies have a fundamental role to play in successful and safe transitions, and positive outcomes across the lifecourse.

Boundaries between work and play are becoming blurred through new technologies and workplace practices, and our ability to predict the requirements of 'the workplace of tomorrow' grows weaker. Because of this, school or colleges can no longer equip leavers with all the knowledge necessary for later life. Learning to learn and to plan for one's own future is much more relevant. Lifelong learning, whether 'on the job' or through more formal courses, has become a reality for most of us.[4]

There is a growing global consensus around the role of social and emotional competencies in supporting young people's transition to adulthood, to employment and to independence. And this is true for **all** young people, not just those who face the greatest barriers. Significant developments across the world are contributing to the body of evidence underpinning this thinking.

The school system in South Australia recognises the importance of social and emotional competencies (and learning approaches that support their development) and has responded by developing frameworks and curricula that help young people develop them: "Much of the spade work has been done, it's been laid down in previous years, it's been well researched, but it just needs to be revitalised"[5]. With this groundwork already complete, South Australia is now well placed to review lessons from across the globe in an effort to embed such approaches across formal education.

In August 2011, Jay Weatherill, the then South Australian Minister for Education commissioned The Australian Centre for Social Innovation, working together with the Young Foundation and the Foundation for Young Australians, to undertake work to explore how best to develop young people's social and emotional competencies – their 'skills for life and work' – within the school setting.

This report presents a review of local, national and global evidence around what is known about the role of social and emotional competencies in promoting social inclusion, successful transitions and civic engagement for young people. The report then proposes a number of vital 'conditions' necessary for social and emotional learning programmes to take root and flourish. Finally, the report draws together a range of 'promising practice' examples which demonstrate positive outcomes for young people, and may be explored in the South Australian context.

Context

The international picture

In both developed and developing countries, a new world of work is emerging. For many years the economies of western countries have been shifting from industry towards the service sector and public sectors, with science and technology innovations and the 'knowledge economy' increasing in importance. So-called 'blue collar' jobs in manufacturing have been outsourced to developing nations where labour costs are much cheaper. Lower-skilled service sector functions such as call centres or back-office work are steadily following them, taking advantage of much-improved education in such countries.

More recently, the global economic slowdown caused by the 2009 recession in both Europe and the USA has significantly reduced the number of opportunities available. Young people – graduates as well as (early) school-leavers – are being disproportionately affected. As youth unemployment rates soar across Europe (up to 50 per cent in Spain for example) and reach new highs in the US[6], civic unrest has followed. There is now growing concern for a generation who may never have experienced work, especially those in 'pockets' of extreme deprivation and marginalisation from the labour market. In France, for example, the unemployment rate in deprived suburbs is typically twice the national average.

The world which our young people enter into is one of fewer jobs, which are often more precarious. This leads to more disjointed career paths than those enjoyed by their parents, and may include periods of unemployment or re-training later in life. The squeeze on finances in both the private and public sectors means that employers are increasingly using temporary and fixed-term contracts, creating uncertainty among the workforce and fractured career paths. A lack of employer support throws the short-term worker back on their own and their family's resources. The risk of long-term social exclusion is enhanced for those who cannot count on such support, particularly at the beginning of their careers, when they may be forced to choose stability of employment over long-term prospects.[7]

At the same time, the technology that powers global trading affects working hours, lengthening the working day. Because of mobile phone technology, employees are expected to be in constant contact.

As a consequence of this changing world of work, employers are increasingly looking for more than just formal qualifications or aptitude. They want employees who are able to move quickly and adapt to new circumstances, who can demonstrate self-discipline and who have experience of working in teams on real life projects. As Thomas L Friedman wrote: "People who not only have the critical thinking skills to do the value-adding jobs that technology can't, but also people who can invent, adapt and reinvent their jobs every day, in a market that changes faster than ever."[8]

However, across the board employers are reporting a shortage of such candidates. In Europe, the USA and Australia the same message rings out from employer surveys – a significant number of young people are simply not equipped with sufficient or appropriate skills for the workplace. One recent survey revealed that 16 per cent of employers think school leavers lack motivation, 55 per cent think they lack self-discipline and a staggering 70

per cent think they lack customer and business awareness.[9] The UK recently created a commission to investigate the problem. It found that alongside high youth unemployment, just a quarter of employers took on young people direct from education, while fewer still offered apprenticeships.[10]

Recent years have also seen a resurgence in popularity for work experience, apprenticeships and vocational programmes. Taiwan's success in this field is being closely monitored by governments around the world as they seek to shake off the stigma that apprenticeships and work-based training courses have long carried.[11] There are no signs yet, however, that stronger or higher profile vocational learning is addressing the perceived lack of workplace skills.

Against this backdrop, there is a growing global consensus among employers, schools and governments around the importance of non-cognitive or 'softer' skills in better preparing young people for the world of work. Consequently, social and emotional learning is being incorporated into the curriculum in a variety of countries. Different than traditional vocational courses, social and emotional learning is aimed at all students and often embedded into the broader curriculum. In the Netherlands, every school now provides a weekly course on workplace skills and a six week 'social internship' for high school students. Spain has embedded social and emotional education in teacher training while in Sweden, social and emotional learning (which has for a long time been a staple of their approach to education of the under sevens) is being introduced with adolescents too, to great success.[12] England recently launched a successful 'Extended Project' for 16 to 17 year olds to replicate that of the highly-regarded International Baccalaureate. Both projects consist of several months of independent work on a chosen subject, allowing students to use their initiative and to take their learning outside the classroom.

The Australian picture

Australia has fared relatively well in the global financial crisis, but as in other developed countries, young people have still been disproportionately affected, with concentrated pockets of disadvantage among particular groups. Before the downturn, unemployment among 15 to 24 year olds was at its lowest recorded level since the 1970s. But although increased numbers have taken up study or training, in 2011 nearly 16 per cent of Australian young people remained not fully engaged in education or employment. Additionally, one in four of the long-term unemployed is aged 15 to 24. Since 2008, the percentage of young Australians without a job for a year or longer has almost doubled. Australian teenagers have higher rates of unemployment than in some OECD countries[13].

The stability of working life for young people has decreased. Young Australians, like their counterparts elsewhere, have been filling the gap with less stable part-time and casual jobs, but such work provides few opportunities for training. Among those in the labour force, three times as many teenagers and more than twice as many young adults now have part-time jobs compared to the mid-1980s. An average of nearly one in five teenagers changed their labour force status every month in 2011, compared with one in ten older workers. Young people also change employers more regularly[14].

Unemployment and disengagement from education in Australia is not evenly spread. Young people with the weakest access to part-time work are those from the groups and locations that have the lowest educational outcomes, rural and remote students, and students who have to shift residence for study reasons.[15] ABS Census and Population of Housing data indicates that nearly 60 per cent of 24 year olds living in very deprived or remote areas have no post-school qualifications, compared to 40 per cent in wealthy neighbourhoods or in the city.[16] Such geographical disadvantages are among those which particularly affect Indigenous students. Despite concerted efforts in the field, Indigenous young people are still significantly less likely to complete year 12 than their peers. Numbers of Indigenous young people going on to higher education after school, too, are not rising as they should.[17] This disparity continues to play out in the jobs market. Those from more privileged positions are able to use networks and employer contacts to gain work, something which those from deprived communities can rarely call upon.[18] Information, advice and guidance from schools or other providers can compensate, but only if supported by a range of business links, programmes and placements to facilitate young people forming their own networks: "Appropriate careers advice is needed because still, so much careers advice is given by teachers who have never actually had experience of work in industry." [19]

However, the Australian Government has not been complacent, and there is significant ground on which to build. Australia has long embraced both social and emotional learning as part of the education system – and the need for more work-based experience – to improve job readiness. The Government is committed to introducing more teaching of SEED and employability skills in schools and in technical and further education (TAFE) colleges, and has already made vocational courses part of standard school leaving qualifications. The National Melbourne Declaration put social, educational (learning to learn) and employability skills at the heart of its goals for Australian young people, and stated a particular focus on the "capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise". [20] A national employability skills framework has been developed, which identifies a set of competencies required not only to gain work, but also to progress: communication, team work, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organisation, self-management, learning and technology. [21] Such competencies have more recently also been referred to as 'Foundation Skills'. While the development of a national Foundation Skills Strategy by the Australian Government is focused on adults, it signals a shift in the recognition of the need to develop social and emotional competencies as a basis for working life.

The picture in South Australia

As Australia mirrors other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, so South Australia mirrors its nation, with figures for those participating and completing year 12 similar to national statistics, and the numbers of 15 to 19 year olds not fully engaged slowly climbing in step with wider trends. But South Australia does also have its own particular assets and challenges.

Generally, young South Australians are embracing the world of work earlier than the Australian average. More of South Australia's fully occupied young people are working, and fewer studying, than any other state barring the Northern Territory. However, increasing

numbers of young people are remaining in school until year 12 is complete.[22] Statistics for South Australia's Indigenous students are improving too, with a 78 per cent SACE completion rate last year,[23] yet much remains to be done, specifically in retaining students up to SACE level and for further training after its completion.

South Australia's employers, according to a report by Business South Australia[24], share their UK counterparts' unease about the readiness of young people for the workplace. Some 33 per cent reported concern over a lack of employability skills among school leavers and another third found it difficult to recruit employees with the appropriate skills for their workplace. A shrinking pool of opportunities means that those on the margins of learning and work face ever greater disadvantage.

As such, interventions to ease the transition between school and work have long been a priority for the South Australian Government, its schools and employers. After a major review, the revised SACE was launched in 2009 in response to an increasingly flexible world of work and to combat low retention rates, which had dropped from 90 per cent in 1992 to 68 per cent in 2004.[25]. Its first cohort, who graduated last year, have studied a curriculum which has a strengthened focus on 'capabilities', in addition to academic achievement.

For example, the new SACE includes a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) to help year 10 students take charge of their own education journey, where they choose relevant subject options according to their preferred career path. The new research project for year 12 students has introduced an extended period of learning on a subject of the student's choice. Teachers report that the exercise encourages ownership, teamwork skills and the discipline needed to stay focused over a long period of time. The new SACE, and particularly the PLP and research project, sits within a framework of five capabilities – communication, civic participation, health, wellbeing and personal development – which young people are encouraged to explore and reflect on as part of their learning.

> "The SACE capabilities are embedded in the practice of schools and are explicit in the SACE. Schools are obliged to help senior secondary students achieve them, and to document their progress towards achieving them." [26]

The SACE has also created opportunities for young people to undertake apprenticeships while still at school, to combine vocational and traditional subjects and to gain credit for out-of-school achievements like volunteering and caring. This has been complemented by the Skills for All reforms, which include a training guarantee for SACE students.

> "Wholesale reforms of the vet sector have made it easier for young people to commence a qualification pathway whilst they're in school, in conjunction with their senior secondary certificate." [27]

More widely the SACE has strengthened the focus on entrepreneurship, creativity, leadership, teamwork and using personal initiative, as part of the curriculum for core academic subjects.

Initial results have been positive. Some 94 per cent of students passed their research project this year and many reported enjoying the new challenge.[28] Employers have been working with schools to offer more work-based experience, and apprenticeships are thriving.

There have been teething problems of course. Some teachers feel out of their depth with the generalist course materials, some students have felt constrained in their choice of research project and a few principals remain concerned that the links with employers in the local area are not strong enough.[29] But South Australia is well placed to work through these difficulties.

In addition, the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) is currently developing a 'skills passport', whereby schools will issue a statement of skills achievements for each student in addition to the certification they receive for their academic studies. This is intended to be linked closely with the PLP and will be trialed in a small number of schools in 2012.

The South Australian Government is well-respected as a pioneer in the field and the strong curriculum framework now in place, as well as political support for social and emotional education at the highest levels, means it is well-placed to continue to innovate as it endeavours to improve young people's transition to work.

This report seeks to build on this momentum, to accelerate the development of SEED skills within mainstream secondary schooling.

The rise in importance of social and emotional learning

Evidence for the importance of social and emotional competencies

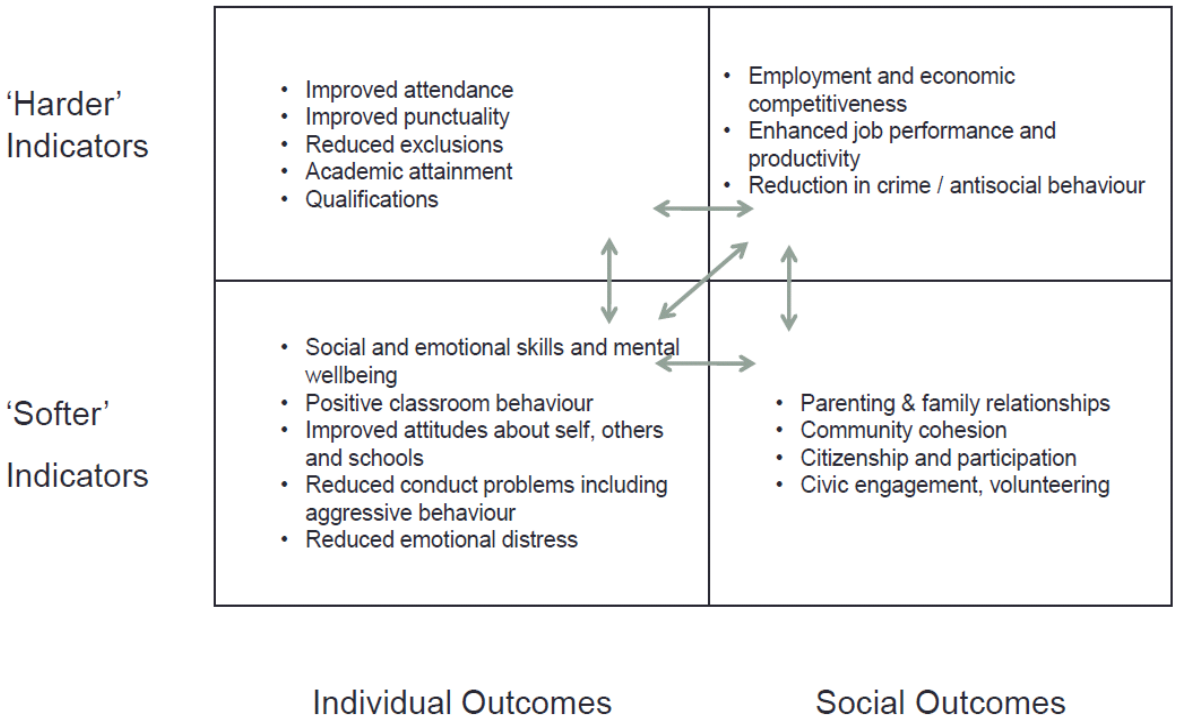
For hundreds of years, schools have been educating young people in the hope of building not only knowledge and skills, but also developing rounded and active citizens, able to contribute not only to the workplace but also to society as a whole. The promotion of social justice, through building equality of opportunity, is intimately entwined with this goal.

Over recent decades, educational writers and theorists have noted the increasing importance placed on academic achievements over vocational skills. As a result, schools have become ever more focused on academic attainment, to the detriment of vocational and extra-curricula activities, and particularly the so-called 'softer skills' which can be a challenge to measure. Employers have noticed the trend too, and now report that young people are ill-prepared for the realities of work in the 21st century. Certainly, the changing nature of the workplace means that traditional understanding of what constitutes work readiness is being called into question, and it is increasingly important that young people are equipped with the skills and competencies to navigate uncertain futures.

However, the tide has now started to turn. There is a growing consensus about the importance of social and emotional competencies in children and adolescents, alongside more traditional cognitive or intellectual skills. These developments have been inspired by a number of sources, including John Bowlby's work on affection and attachment, Abraham Maslow and Carl Roger's work in the area of humanist psychology, James Heckman's work on character development, and Martin Seligman's work on positive psychology. It has also been fuelled by increasing importance attached to the concept of emotional intelligence, as popularised by Daniel Goleman, and the work of others including Howard Gardner and Robert Sternberg.

Scientific research now backs up what we have long thought to be true – that social and emotional competencies are important for lifelong success. This is reflected by both improved outcomes across the lifecourse for the individual (such as employability, confidence, resilience, health and income) and for society (such as civility, participation in democracy, a stronger economy and a more flexible workforce). This is shown in figure one:

Figure 1: Individual and societal outcomes of social and emotional skills and learning[30,31,32,33,34,35]



The literature on this topic is wide-ranging, from large scale reviews and longitudinal studies tracking young people over time, to subjective polls and qualitative interviews. However, there are significant patterns. In analysing the evidence we found that young people with well refined non-cognitive skills, including social and emotional competencies, were:

- **higher achievers**
  The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) large-scale review of 317 studies on the impact of social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes in the US found SEL to improve students' academic performance on standardised achievement tests by 11 to 17 percentile points, indicating that these offer students a practical educational benefit.[36] Elsewhere James Heckman showed that students who received social and emotional skills as children go on to earn 15 to 17 per cent more than their peers.[37]
- **more likely to be employed and to progress at work**
  Employers report recruiting school leavers who demonstrate maturity, discipline and experience in the workplace far more readily than their peers.
- **more disciplined**
  The CASEL review also showed that US social and emotional learning programmes reduced young people's conduct problems, aggressive behaviour and emotional distress.[38]

In addition, young people with good social and emotional competencies also go on to play a significant role in society by:

- **improving workforce performance**

An Australian study shows that those with high levels of SEED skills are less likely to be absent from work, and have improved performance, productivity and creativity in the workplace.[39]

- **building civic behaviour**
  Research also links social and emotional learning and competencies to the development of citizenship, participation and civic engagement, and leadership.[40, 41] Many cross sectional studies show a correlation between wellbeing, social ties and pro-social behaviour, such as participation, civic engagement, and volunteering. In turn, pro-social behaviour has also been found to lead to increased positive affect.[42]
- **supporting their own children to become socially mobile**
  Studies show that parents with high social and emotional competencies are able to better support their children to perform well at school, so that in turn they go on to earn more.[43] As such, skilling up today's generation of school leavers has far-reaching consequences for the lives of their children in 20 or 30 years' time, otherwise patterns of entrenched disadvantage are unlikely to be broken.

The literature also shows a growing recognition that individuals and institutions beyond the home, such as schools and workplaces, must take responsibility for helping young people to acquire these social and emotional skills. Traditionally, social and emotional competencies have been transmitted and acquired within the context of stable and functional family and community environments.[44] However:

> "Increasing family breakdown, serial changes in adult partnerships, and the more limited role of the extended family, plus the effects of deprivation, increase the chances that this home 'tuition' cemented by love, approval and affection is absent."[45]

Given the shifting societal context, if education is to achieve the goal of promoting equality of opportunity, it is a matter of social justice that education providers consider the development of social and emotional competencies as being at the heart of their role.

Changing policy and practice

Twenty years ago the overwhelming policy narrative was that while social and emotional learning was important, it was primarily the responsibility of parents, or of institutions caring for those with special needs or experiencing particular disadvantage.

However the mounting evidence, as set out above, has brought a new paradigm – one where social and emotional competencies are seen to have lifelong relevance for all, and as such it is the responsibility of parents, the state, communities and employers to build these skills. This is in part a recognition that all of these influencers will reap the rewards in societal and economic benefits. This shift is summarised in figure two below:

Table 2: The changing view of social and emotional education[46]

TRADITIONAL VIEW	HOLISTIC VIEW
For young children	Lifelong relevance
Deficit model – focus on pathologies and problems	Focus on competencies and strengths
For individuals with 'special needs'	For all – including those without 'problems'
Responsibility of / developed in the home	Responsibility of / developed in a wide range of institutions incl. schools and workplaces
Bolt-on extra / low status activity	Central to educational goals e.g. learning, attainment, behaviour

This shift in perspective has brought with it a ready investment from schools and governments around the world in teaching social and emotional skills to young people. For example in the USA, thousands of social and emotional learning programmes now run at the district level. The Penn Resilience Programme is among the most well-known.

In the UK, the majority of English primary schools have adopted the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme. Further afield in Europe, the focus has been on notions of 'mental health', within a Health Promoting Schools framework emphasising coping skills, and anti-bullying.

And in Australia, we see the same momentum. Initiatives like Health Promoting Schools and the MindMatters Programme are bringing improving youth transitions into employment by building social and emotional learning whether at an early age, in high school or in further education. In Australia, and globally too, there have been great successes, but also challenges.

Conditions that allow social and emotional learning to thrive

There is much to be learnt from the success of social and emotional learning programmes across the globe, while the challenges they have faced are just as informative. By comparing Australian and international practice we have drawn out five common themes, which can act as either barriers or enablers to the successful teaching of social and emotional skills.

Barriers to success

We suggest there are five barriers which can limit the impact of individual social and emotional learning programmes, and hinder the uptake or adoption of such programmes by others.

Firstly, **a lack of impact evidence.** Social and emotional learning is subjective and as such it can be hard to measure in individuals: "There's a lack of evidence that we're doing a good job about measuring and reporting back to kids about their skills and abilities in those areas."[47] The majority of programmes are poorly evaluated, lacking baseline data or control groups, or missing a common method to allow comparability with similar initiatives.[48] There are plenty of examples of good practice and qualitative studies[49], but for some this is not enough to endorse adoption of or investment in an approach. As such the replication of the best teaching initiatives has often been limited by the lack of evidence of impact.

Secondly, **a lack of systematic buy in.** All too often well-intentioned social and emotional learning programmes have failed to become embedded in everyday practice because of a fragmented approach to their implementation. Approaches can be disjointed, dispersed and inconsistent (within schools, across schools and districts, and whole countries). Key issues include:

- a tendency for schools to have multiple, simultaneous programmes in operation[50]
- scattered attempts to address single components of social and emotional learning and focus on limited breadth of outcomes
- social and emotion learning and outcomes tend to be seen as separate to academic outcomes and learning, and sometimes seen as taking away time and energy from traditional learning.

Thirdly, some experienced **difficulties in establishing school-wide commitment and leadership.** A lack of sufficient training, and of understanding of the links between social and emotional learning and academic performance and other outcomes, combined with pressure on educators to meet academic targets, pose a challenge to the school-wide commitment and leadership needed to ensure success of programmes: "The big messages coming out of educational research are about quality of teaching, quality of what teachers do in classrooms, quality of school leadership". [51]

Fourthly, some programmes **lack reach into the wider community beyond school.** We found that most social and emotional learning programmes were confined to schools. This is despite the acknowledgement in the field of the importance of school-family partnerships,

and school-business links, in promoting social and emotional learning and academic attainment, and acquisition of employability skills: "We can't make schools responsible for all learning. Teachers can't do it all."[52] There is a need for involvement and coordination of wider stakeholders including, families, communities, and business.

And fifthly, we noted that efforts to embed social and emotional learning programmes were often hampered by a **lack of common standards and targets linked with social and emotional outcomes:** "Until these actually become part of assessment, a lot of teachers will not see them as being vital"[53] A growing push for academic standards and standardised testing based on outcomes in core, academic subjects means that social and emotional learning outcomes can be overlooked.

Enablers of success

Each of these five elements can also be an enabler of success, rather than a barrier, as the table below summarises.

For example, a lack of evidence may inhibit widespread replication of the programme elsewhere, but a government **evidence base which systematically collates and compares examples of practice** and then recommends what works best in what context could rapidly accelerate adoption. Equally, better standards for evaluation would allow social and emotional learning programmes to be compared. In the next section we draw on the CASEL review from the USA to exemplify this.

Secondly, programmes which are **integrated into the school ethos and wider curricula** have a much higher chance of success. Specifically, programmes can integrate more readily by (a) serving as a vehicle for teaching other school subjects, (b) linking to other content areas, and (c) demonstrating flexibility in being rotated through different parts of traditional academic curricula. MindMatters and SEAL are each good examples of this and are examined in the next section.

Thirdly, it is well proven that head teachers, principals, politicians and government officers who **commit resources to training teachers in how to develop social and emotional competencies** see much better results. The underlying theory and implementation strategies must be understood and practiced well by educators, which requires investment in the professional development of school staff. The Stronger Smarter case study in the next section exemplifies this point.

Fourthly, the most effective SEL programmes are **rooted in the local community and connected with businesses**. Effective programmes incorporate efforts between the classroom, home, school and even entire community/district to provide learners with multiple structured and unstructured opportunities to learn. Enabling Enterprise in the UK is an excellent example of this.

And finally, the research suggests there is further room to **hold schools to account for their progress in developing social and emotional competencies in their learners**. Illinois has seen great success by holding its 4,500 schools to account through a common framework of targets, based largely on learner outcomes.

Table 3: Five common conditions which prevent or enable SEL programmes to succeed

Condition	Description	Barriers	Enablers	Case study examples
1. Evidence based approach	Adoption of systematic, robust evidence based on experience and understanding of what works, with common agreement on outcomes	Not enough rigorous evaluation – lack of evidence of effectiveness / impact of trials[54] Majority of programmes are lacking in scientific standards and methodology[55]	Need to build evidence based on what works best, in what context Need for pre-test and post-test evaluation system together with a control group that allow results to be compared with those of similar initiatives[56]	CASEL (USA) - Not-for-profit organisation investigating the best ways to advance children's social and emotional learning; have established guidelines
2. Continuity and integration	Continuity in programming across grades and within school Integration of SEL practice school-wide	Approaches tend to be fragmented, dispersed – lack of well-designed, systematic approaches Schools tend to have multiple, simultaneous programmes in place Often scattered attempts to address single components of SEL / focus on limited breadth of outcomes Academics and social and emotional learning advocates viewed in 'either-or' / opposing terms	Schools can benefit from set of standard recommendations / strategies to follow to coordinate SEL with other efforts within school and across grades Programmes designed to coordinate well with other school activities by (a) serving as a vehicle for teaching other school subjects, (b) ability to link to other content areas, and (c) flexibility in being rotated through different parts of traditional academic curricula. Another aspect of integration involves integration of the programme into the wider community (see 4.)	Whole school approaches e.g. MindMatters (Australia) or SEAL (UK) Integrating social and emotional learning into curriculum e.g. Geelong Grammar School (Victoria) Public School 24 in New York City is one of many schools in the US that has incorporated SEL into every aspect of their school's curriculum and culture.
3. Commitment and leadership	For effective programming to take root and last, a school-	Educators reluctant to take time away from instruction of traditional academic subjects –	Professional development of school staff: Underlying theory and implementation strategies must be understood and practiced	The Stronger Smarter Institute (Australia) works with school

	wide commitment across classrooms, teachers and administration is needed. School leaders are key players – programme selection, implementation and sustainability depend largely on their support.	despite the fact that evidence indicates that SEL plays a critical role in academic performance Few teachers received sufficient pre-service or in-service training on SEL / lack of understanding of what employability skills are / social emotional competencies are	well by educators. Education in evidence base on social and emotional skills and best ways for developing these should be incorporated as central component in teacher preparation and professional development.	leaders to change the culture within institutions, challenging low expectations for Indigenous young people. Schools can then act as hubs, supporting the learning and development of other schools locally.
4. Involvement of the wider community	Coordination of key stakeholders – teachers, administrators, parents and students – in planning, implementation and evaluation SEL interventions most likely to succeed when tailored to values, beliefs, norms and histories of the children and families served.	A lack of reach into communities and a failure to recognise the existing leadership structures and traditions Programmes and learning remain confined to the school setting and do not extend beyond school walls	Effective SEL programming should include efforts to foster school-family partnerships to support and extend classroom learning and positive impact on students. Effective programmes incorporate efforts between the classroom, home, school and even entire community/district to provide students with multiple structured and unstructured opportunities to learn. Before a programme is selected, schools should assess needs, resources, policies and practices of school and surrounding community. School-business partnerships and links	Enabling Enterprise (UK) links learning experiences with visits to business in action Knowsley MBC (UK) has taken a holistic view of 'young people's learning offer' through its integration of mental toughness into its services. This includes linking formal, non-formal and informal education provision to address particular areas of need for particular young people.
5. Standards and accountability	Efforts to embed social and emotional learning and development can be	Standards / targets still centre on academic attainment /	Legislators commit to establishing educational policies that hold schools accountable for the	SEL standards in Illinois (USA) - Standards for Social Emotional

	supported by standards and targets linked with social and emotional outcomes, to ensure accountability	grades in core subject areas Efforts needed to increase accountability among educators in schools who are ignoring SEL needs.	social and emotional development of students	Learning covering 4,533 schools

Learning from experiences

Promising practice examples

Across the world there are many examples of promising practice associated with social and emotional learning, ranging from innovative programmes and whole-schools approaches to legislative frameworks and research collaboratives. The case studies profiled in this report are by no means intended to be wholly representative of the diverse range of global practice. We have chosen to focus on examples from the UK, USA and Australia due to their relatively comparable education systems. These examples surfaced through stakeholder consultations and desk-based research. They were selected to cut across a spectrum of different scales and to illustrate the variety of key ingredients which we encountered.

There is much to learn from each about the principles which underpin the initiatives, but also about how they have helped to create the conditions for social and emotional learning to thrive. This could be through evidence of impact, connections with the wider curricula, commitment to professional development, support from the wider community or measurement and accountability. Some speak of South Australia's leading role in this field, others highlight new opportunities to build on the good work already taking place with new approaches, pilots and experiments.

Figure 4: Case study summaries

	Case study	Location	Description	Key ingredients
1.	Geelong Grammar School	Australia	Co-educational boarding school and recognised leader in Positive Education	• Asset-based model • Whole-school approach – flourishing institution • Staff training
2.	Woodville High School	Australia	Large educational centre with focus on non-traditional educational experience beyond the classroom	• Experiences outside classroom • Supportive relationships • Wider community engagement
3.	Stronger Smarter Institute	Australia	A hub of a growing network of schools and individuals engaged in changing the tide of low expectations in Indigenous Education.	• Positive sense of identity and leadership • High expectations • Strengths-based approach
4.	MindMatters	Australia	National health initiative using whole-school approach to mental health promotion in communities and schools, prioritising teacher education	• Whole-school approach • Leadership • Involvement of young people
5.	Darwen Aldridge Community Academy	UK	Independent non-fee-paying school specialising in entrepreneurship	• Wider community engagement • Investment in physical environment • Entrepreneurship as a discrete subject and underpinning theme • Outcomes focus and framework
6.	Beyond Current Horizons	UK	Research programme exploring how future social and technological developments might present new challenges and opportunities for education	• Support for long-term planning activities • Cross-subject activities
7.	Enabling Enterprise	UK	Not-for-profit company which assists teachers by integrating skills development into different areas of the curriculum	• Practical learning • Developing skills alongside qualifications • Putting learning in context • Long-term, joined-up approach

8.	Studio Schools	UK	Innovative state school model for 14 to 19 year olds of all abilities	• Practical learning and emphasis on employability and life skills • Exposure to real work • Personalisation
9.	Mental Toughness Development	UK	Application of Mental Toughness Development in an educational setting as part of a new learning offer in Knowsley	• Evidence-based approach • Coordination of key stakeholders • Holistic view of young people's learning
10.	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning	USA	Not-for-profit organisation investigating the best ways to advance children's social and emotional learning	• Strongly grounded in rigorous evidence • Cross-field and cross-discipline collaborations
11.	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning	UK	Whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that support effective learning, positive behaviour and emotional wellbeing	• Building a school ethos to promote social and emotional skills • Involving pupils in all aspects of school life • Generative approach
12.	SEL standards in Illinois	USA	Standards for Social Emotional Learning covering 4,533 schools	• Standards and accountability • On-going assessment and evaluation • Professional development

Geelong Grammar School

Website: www.ggs.vic.edu.au/
Founded: 1855
Location: Victoria, Australia
Description: Co-educational boarding school and recognised leader in Positive Education

Background

Geelong Grammar School is an independent, Anglican, co-educational, boarding and day school. The school aims to inspire its students to flourish, to embrace their learning opportunities and to lead positive, meaningful and engaged lives. Geelong Grammar School has a non-selective enrolment policy and currently caters for approximately 1,500 students from pre-school to Year 12. An on-going collaboration with Professor Martin Seligman and his team from the University of Pennsylvania has resulted in the development of Positive Education – a framework that unifies the core principles from the science of Positive Psychology with the practices of education. Over 900 students have been taught the skills of resilience through the Positive Psychology Programmes at Geelong Grammar School.

Key ingredients

Asset-model approach

The overarching aim of Positive Education at GGS is for individuals to flourish. Flourishing is defined as elevated emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing.[57] The starting point for this is a strengths-based approach rather than a deficit model. There is widespread concern about the increase in depression and anxiety in young people, but rather than treating the symptoms of depression when they occur, Positive Psychology focuses on cultivating positive emotion and character traits. Instead of asking 'what is wrong?', Positive Psychology asks 'what is right?' Justin Robinson, Head of Positive Education, Geelong Grammar School, said: "We don't want people just to experience positive emotions, but to understand that through experiencing positive emotions you can broaden and build many of your resources."[58]

Whole school approach – flourishing institution

GGS has set out to implement Positive Psychology through all aspects of its operation. A review of the school's progress with implementation in 2009 highlighted the need for greater emphasis on organisational culture, norms and practices. In response, a Positive Institution Project was started to focus on the organisation. Implicit teaching of Positive Education now occurs at every level of the school, at every campus and across all aspects of school life. Justin Robinson added: "We don't just say 'student flourishing', we say 'individual flourishing' because we want every staff member, whether they're teachers or non-teachers at the school to be flourishing as well."[59] Staff members are encouraged to share personal experiences to help develop a common understanding of why and how Positive Education can benefit the organisation and the people within it. He added: "Each subject area must report back to the principal each year on how they're embedding some of the skills into their teaching within their own curriculum."[60]

Staff training

Staff training and professional development have played a crucial role in the development and implementation of Positive Education at GGS. Since 2008, more than 250 staff – teaching and non-teaching – have taken part in intensive residential training courses with Professor Martin Seligman and his team, through which they have learned and practiced Positive Psychology principles and skills. GGS now has twenty staff members who have been trained as trainers. This has created a sustainable model by making training more affordable for the school. He concluded: "The fact that our model fits for adults and students and the skills are taught to each of our staff members and that we have refresher training every term as we revisit the various concepts shows to an extent that the model transfers into a workplace." [61]

Woodville High School

Website: www.woodvillehs.sa.edu.au/
Founded: 1915
Location: Adelaide, Australia
Description: A large educational centre which delivers a range of educational programmes to students in Years 8-12 and beyond.

Background

Woodville High School is located in the western suburbs of Adelaide with a student population of 950 from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is designated as a Special Interest Music Centre offering students the opportunity to have a strong focus on music. Over 50 percent of the students are School Card Holders who receive government assistance because of family poverty. Woodville High School uses the Personal Learning Plan as an organisational structure across the curriculum and a vehicle for more personalised approaches to learning which are appropriate to the 21st century. Recently the school has been widening its curriculum delivery to expand vocational pathways and more flexible learning options.

Key ingredients

Experiences outside classroom

Woodville High School has a strong focus on non-traditional learning experiences beyond the classroom. The 'Alternative Programmes' offered to students are designed to increase personal motivation and sense of self worth as well as providing a range of opportunities for participation and involvement in school life. These activities are based on experiential learning principles where young people are encouraged to learn through doing and reflection. One initiative has involved employing a community mentor to provide alternative learning experiences for small groups of students in science, maths, and English through hands-on work in the garden. "There's a sense in which human beings connect with nature and have a sense of freedom outside the four walls of the classroom, especially those people that have had negative experiences inside those four walls," said Jeff Glass, Alternative Programs Coordinator, Woodville High School.[62]

Supportive relationships

There is a long-standing commitment to wellbeing as the foundation of effective teaching and learning at Woodville High School. A key element of this is creating an environment that is safe and supportive for all students. The school is actively involved in MindMatters and has clear strategies for dealing with all forms of bullying and harassment. A peer support programme has been operating for several years based on the premise that positive relationships can be developed by improving confidence, communication skills, and self-esteem. The programme is run by student volunteers who work with year eight students to support the transition from primary school to high school. The Alternative Programmes available at the school also provide the opportunity to build relationships with adults who can provide advice and act as role models. Jeff Glass added: "The kids see that I'm partnering them in a process, rather than telling them what to do." [63]

Wider community engagement

The Alternative Programmes are designed to develop a sense of belonging and positive contribution to the local community among students. The Garden Project makes use of the community garden to create links with the community. He added: "The way forward is going to be to invite the community to come in and to share the land, to share the produce, to share that facility so that it becomes a community garden as well. That's a vision that we're in the process of putting into practice at Woodville High School."[64] Another form of engagement is the work with community liaison officers who interact with members of ethnic communities to support the diversity of the student population. There is also an initiative called the Wiltja Programme which accommodates young Indigenous people from the APY Lands who have English as a second language.

Stronger Smarter Institute

Website: www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au/

Founded: 2005

Location: Australia wide

Description: A hub of a growing network of schools and individuals working to change the tide of low expectations in Indigenous Education.

Background

Originally called the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute, the Stronger Smarter Institute is a partnership between Education Queensland and Queensland University of Technology (QUT). It was founded by Dr Chris Sarra, the former Principal of Cherbourg State School, which was experiencing particular problems with literacy, numeracy, truancy and discipline. Through strong leadership and clear vision Chris Sarra facilitated many changes at the school that led to dramatically improved school attendance and increased community involvement in education. This has evolved in a scalable approach that focuses on encouraging young Indigenous Australians to be strong **and** smart, nurturing their cultural identity and striving for high achievement. One of the Institute's main activities is a 12-month leadership programme for educators. Some 300 schools have been involved since 2005, with 400 participants. Schools that have improved outcomes by utilising the Stronger Smarter philosophy are identified and appointed as 'hubs' to spread practice locally.

Key ingredients

Positive sense of identity and leadership

The work of the Stronger Smarter Institute is grounded in the belief that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child has the right to be proud of their cultural identity. In the past the dominant modes of teaching and learning have tended to isolate Aboriginal and Torres Strait identities. The approach of the Stronger Smarter Institute is to espouse a strong and positive sense of what it means to be Aboriginal in Australian society. Dialogue is encouraged to bring an Indigenous voice into educational settings and create a culture of interaction. This puts a value on the social and cultural context of the learner and helps to build strong relationships.

High expectations

Teacher expectations of themselves and their students have a very significant impact on student outcomes. The Stronger Smarter Institute is tied to the aspiration that every person at every level of the Education system should have high expectations of children. This means challenging the stereotype that Indigenous children are underachievers and pushing Indigenous students to achieve outcomes comparable to other students. Staff are encouraged to incorporate values and aspirations as part of the vocabulary in their schools.

Strengths-based approach

Deficit approaches often locate the root of the problem within students rather than within the culture and curriculum of educational institutions. A core element of the Stronger Smarter philosophy is a rejection of the prevailing deficit discourse about Indigenous students. The Institute supports principals and teachers to challenge their assumptions about Indigenous students and reflect on their professional practice. This is a strengths-based approach; one that emphasises the potential of people rather than highlighting gaps. It also involves a recognition of the assets that already exist in the community and which should be brought into the classroom.

Toronto High School

Toronto High School is one of the designated Stronger Smarter Learning Communities (SSLC) hubs. It is a co-educational comprehensive school in New South Wales catering for students from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The school is focused on creating an environment in which quality education and personal development is fostered to prepare students for life and work. There is also a strong commitment to closing the achievement gap for Aboriginal students. Toronto High seeks to learn about, nurture and value the cultural identify of its Aboriginal students in order to assist them to be effective learners. Mark McConville, Principal, Toronto High School, said: "We've had a focus on professional learning with our staff in areas such as cultural competency and all the way down to the curriculum delivery for Aboriginal students. The school's changed in a cultural way to reflect the community in which we work."[65] Toronto High has also established a number of engagement and retention initiatives such as a Service Guarantee whereby, if a student leaves the school, staff will keep in contact with them for up to two years.

MindMatters

Website: www.mindmatters.edu.au
Founded: 1997
Location: Australia-wide
Description: National health initiative using whole-school approach to mental health promotion in communities and schools, prioritising teacher education.

Background

MindMatters was in part a response to a concern at the federal level about adolescent suicide rates. MindMatters was developed by the Principals Australia Institute on behalf of and funded by the federal government. It ties in with government and state guidelines on social and emotional education, positive school environments and promoting good mental health. MindMatters resources and training have been implemented in a variety of ways. Some 80 per cent of Australian schools teaching children above the age of 11 employ staff who have attended MindMatters training and 38 per cent of Australian secondary schools use MindMatters as their main mental health programme. Once schools have attended training, implemented MindMatters and submitted an evaluation, they may be recognised as a 'MindMatters school'. The whole process takes 18 months to three years, and at the time of writing just two schools in South Australia have completed it. MindMatters Plus is a further programme, currently being piloted in 17 demonstration schools, of which three are in South Australia. It is designed to offer more targeted support to those pupils who are more at risk, or who have specific mental health needs.

Key ingredients

Whole School Approach

The Whole School Approach is the implementation process for MindMatters. It uses a mixture of strategies to involve students, parents, teachers, the community and external providers in creating a 'continuum of connection' for students. Within it lie three main areas: curriculum, ethos and partnerships. Teachers and students are encouraged to understand the importance of positive relationships and wellbeing for learning and personal development within the classroom. Such learning is integrated into the curriculum while social and emotional considerations also permeate the way subjects are taught. Schools review their processes, policies and communication strategies to ensure that they fit with a positive ethos and contribute to the wellbeing and mental health of students and staff. Schools consider providing specific facilities, timetabling and training for staff. Teams must clarify pathways and protocols surrounding referring students to other services both within and outside the school and reporting the outcomes of such referrals. Similar links are used to manage students' transitions. More specific community initiatives also contribute.

Leadership

A strong, diverse and consistent core team is a pre-requisite for the scheme's success. The team will cascade training, build the scheme's momentum within the school and promote greater contact with parents, communities and service providers outside. Leadership from young people must be supported by leadership from the top.

Involvement of young people

Students are always heavily involved in managing and delivering the programme, often as members of the core team or as peer advisors. This empowers the individuals themselves, ensures that other students are represented and in the case of peer support, creates a much larger pool of trained, approachable mentors. MindMatters includes one youth-led module and a 'Youth Empowerment Process'. Young people lead their peers through clusters of schools working together. They might work with peers in small groups, with teachers or even the whole school.

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

Website: www.daca.uk.com
Founded: 2008
Location: Lancashire, UK
Description: An independent non-fee-paying school specialising in entrepreneurship

Background

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (DACA) is one of four academies sponsored by the Aldridge Foundation. It was opened in 2008, followed by the Brighton Aldridge Community Academy in 2010 and Port Slade Aldridge Community Academy in 2011. A fourth is scheduled to open in 2014 in North Kensington. DACA takes an expansive view on entrepreneurialism by promoting a positive attitude and determination to succeed, and developing young people as active citizens. Students follow the National Curriculum but with a different curriculum structure. According to the latest Ofsted inspection report (Jan 2011):

> "The characteristics of entrepreneurship are starting to become a hallmark of learning at the academy, while the sport specialism is aiding healthy lifestyles and enjoyment, as well as providing opportunities to contribute to the community, for instance as a sports leader or junior referee."[66]

DACA has achieved rapidly improved academic performance. In its second year after opening, DACA recorded a 26 percentage point improvement in the number of students achieving five or more A* to Cs in their GCSE exams including maths and English.[67]

Key ingredients

Wider community engagement

DACA works within the 'triangle' of home, school and community. This is aided by the academy's central location and the development of a campus concept across the town. Within the academy there is an Entrepreneurship Bridge consisting of eleven office pods offered to local young people and community organisations to run start-up businesses or social enterprises. The academy also works hard to establish links with the business community, allowing them to shape curriculum and provide students with a variety of work-related experiences, mentoring and exposure to a wide range of career options. The 'Darwen Creates' team leads this work by supporting students to develop business ventures during entrepreneurship sessions or in dedicated incubation units. Business partners include What We Do, V, ?What If!, Winning Pitch, Community and Business Partners and Women in Business.

Investment in physical environment
DACA first opened in the buildings of a predecessor school but later relocated to a site in Darwen town centre in September 2010. The design of the new building is open and spacious, containing flexible learning spaces which contribute to a business-like feel. The Entrepreneurship Bridge that spans the entrance atrium of the academy is designed to act as a metaphorical bridge between the world of education and the world of business.

Brendan Loughran, Principal, Darwen Aldridge Community Academy, said: "The change in the physical environment has been a key ingredient. Moving into a brand new, state of the art, 21st century working and learning environment has made a massive difference and a lot of that is down to the architecture and design of the place."[68]

Entrepreneurship as a discrete subject and underpinning theme
The academy provides entrepreneurship both as a discrete subject and as a theme underpinning every area of the curriculum. The director of specialisms is responsible for ensuring that this approach is embedded and that staff are supported in the delivery of different learning approaches. Brendan Loughran added: "The strapline we use with the students in the academy is very simple. We just say that adopting an entrepreneurial attitude is about having a positive attitude and a determination to succeed."[69] Six characteristics have been chosen to make up a 'currency of entrepreneurship': determination, creativity, problem-solving, risk-taking, teamwork and passion. Students are rewarded with DACA points and at the end of every term exceptional students are awarded DACA badges. The student uniform is also designed to influence the outlook of the children with students in years seven to ten having a navy blue uniform and the sixth form dress code being 'appropriate for work and ready for interview'.

Outcomes focus and framework
The academy aims to ensure that its intended outcomes link with and are relevant to wider strategic goals such as those of national government departments. There is a focus on both individual as well as community level outcomes. The Aldridge Foundation is currently developing a bespoke entrepreneurship Outcomes Star[70] in collaboration with Triangle Consulting for use in Aldridge Academies and other environments. This will provide a tool to capture the progress of students in developing the entrepreneurial mindset, and its wider impact on their lives. The Star is being designed collaboratively including several workshops with teachers, managers and students.

Beyond Current Horizons

Website: www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk
Founded: 2007
Location: UK-wide
Description: Research programme exploring how future social and technological developments might present new challenges or opportunities for education.

Background

Beyond Current Horizons was commissioned in 2007 by the then Department for Education and Skills to explore how future social and technological developments might present new challenges and opportunities for education. The overall goal of the project was 'to build a set of long-term and challenging scenarios for the future of education to 2025 and beyond in the context of socio-technical change.' The six future scenarios that emerged were based on 18 months' work by a team of around 100 experts. Further activities involved consulting stakeholders on their reaction to these trends and creating practical outputs in order to help the education system develop a sustainable response.

Key ingredients

Support for long-term planning activities

The materials provided by Beyond Current Horizons are designed to support the education community including head teachers, department heads, and local authorities. One of the main outputs from the project was Vision Mapper, an online resource to support long-term planning and decision-making. The toolkit comprises a range of activities and materials designed to inspire broader thinking, challenge assumptions and create robust action plans. This includes suggestions for appraisal workshops, case studies to review different school designs, and activities for curriculum planning.

Cross-subject activities

The research was organised around five challenges:

- generations and lifecourse
- identities, citizenship, communities
- knowledge, creativity and communication
- work and employment
- state, market, and third sector

These challenges were selected by the Expert Advisory Group – an interdisciplinary forum which included representatives from the fields of education, computing, neuroscience, philosophy, innovation, economics and geography. The research was supported by a set of cross-subject activities to ensure close collaboration and cross-fertilisation of evidence. Papers were commissioned where a common theme or interest was identified across multiple challenges.

Public engagement

An important element of Beyond Current Horizons was engaging with people from all walks of life to uncover their hopes, fears and priorities for education in the future. Beyond Current Horizons aimed to gather representative opinions from all areas of society to ensure that the research was shaped by the values and aspirations of everyone with a stake in education and not only by scientific evidence. Online tools such as Million Futures and Power League were used to capture people's ideas and a blog allowed views to be exchanged about new developments in the project. In addition, a representative Citizens Panel was established to provide guidance on the research programme. Alongside the public engagement activities

there was a set of events and consultations to gather input from policy, practitioner and industry groups.

Enabling Enterprise

Website: www.enablingenterprise.org
Founded: 2009
Location: London, Birmingham, Manchester (UK)
Description: A non-profit organisation offering programmes which integrate skills development into different areas of the curriculum to equip young people with the skills, aspirations and experiences they need to succeed in life.

Background

Enabling Enterprise is aimed at providing young people with an education that prepares them for 'real life', by offering schools the tools to embed enterprise and practical learning into existing subject curricula. Tom Ravenscroft founded Enabling Enterprise in 2009 in response to his experiences as a secondary school teacher in Hackney, London. While teaching business studies he realised that students were not responding well to the traditional textbook-and-coursework style of teaching. To reengage his students he put together a course which enabled them to set up their own small businesses. Enabling Enterprise has been running for two years and is currently entering its third academic year working with over 10,000 students across more than 80 schools.

Key ingredients

Practical learning

Enabling Enterprise programmes aim to harness the creativity and entrepreneurialism of young people who are disengaged from school. Students work collaboratively in teams to develop their own business or other projects over the year thereby involving them in something practical. From the Enabling Enterprise perspective, 'entrepreneurialism' is treated in the broadest possible sense - starting, leading and being the advocate for any project. Tom Ravenscroft, Director, Enabling Enterprise, said: "The projects are designed so that they don't always work out. You know, there are safety nets, but their project can fail. They don't necessarily make a profit. They can lose money. Failure is a real option." [71]

Developing skills alongside qualifications

A key element of Enabling Enterprise is its emphasis on skills development alongside qualifications, and creating experiences that can be converted into the workplace. Tom Ravenscroft added: "Things like being able to work in a team, being able to lead, being able to present, being able to organise."[72] This is a response to the observation that mainstream education is not doing enough to equip young people with basic social skills, which are highly sought-after by employers. Enabling Enterprise simultaneously places emphasis on building the confidence young people need to put skills into action by taking students through a process of recapping what they already know, learning some new theory, applying it and then reflecting. Furthermore, two of the programmes that Enabling Enterprise offers are accredited, meaning that students not only gain skills but also an extra qualification.

Putting learning in context

Enabling Enterprise is founded on the premise that in many cases schools only equip students for a fraction of what they need if they are going to make an effective transition from the educational world to the real world. Students are given opportunities to make connections between school and the real world. Tom Ravenscroft added: "It's being consistent in making sure that skills, experience, aspirations, are a key part of every single lesson. If you think about a lesson, it should have some link to why it's useful for the kid to be learning it. It should have a variety of activities, and they should be applying it in some way."[73] A key part of Enabling Enterprise programmes involves taking students out on trips every term to top businesses such as UBS or PricewaterhouseCoopers so that students can see how their learning will be of value in later life. These trips also play an important part in broadening young people's aspirations and opening their eyes to different possibilities.

Long-term, joined-up approach

Skills development is typically delivered to students in a fragmented manner. Enabling Enterprise distinguishes itself from traditional approaches to skills development by embracing a long-term, joined-up approach. The programmes run over the entire course of the academic year. This can either take the form of a discreet subject or be integrated to fit in with a particular subject curriculum. "We've tried to work within existing frameworks. We've tried to work with what's already there, and to be flexible to do that," Tom Ravenscroft concluded.[74] In this way, Enabling Enterprise programmes complement the formal curriculum but with a strong skills and project focus.

Studio Schools

Website: www.studioschoolstrust.org
Founded: 2007
Location: UK-wide
Description: Innovative state school model for 14 to 19 year olds of all abilities

Background

Studio Schools are a new model of school designed to help 14 to 19 year olds better prepare for the world of work. The model was developed in response to mounting evidence suggesting that schools are not doing enough to foster employability skills. The initiative also aims to counter widespread disengagement from traditional schooling by targeting young people at risk of failing to fulfil their potential. Studio Schools teach the national curriculum but education is taken out the traditional classroom setting by teaching students primarily through project-based activities in their local area. This approach combines the real work element of Production Schools in Denmark with the practical learning delivered by New Tech High Schools in the USA. The first Studio Schools opened in September 2010 in Luton and Kirklees, with plans to open new schools in every region of England by the end of 2012. Studio Schools were officially launched in November 2010 by the UK Education Minister Michael Gove.

Key ingredients

Practical learning and emphasis on employability and life skills

Studio Schools put a strong emphasis on practical learning through Enquiry Based Learning (EBL) and project-based activity. Learning is contextualised and grounded in the local community – for example by tasking students to write a health report for a local hospital. The CREATE skills framework was developed to embed employability and life skills in the curriculum. CREATE stands for:

- communication
- relating to people
- enterprise
- applied skills
- thinking skills
- emotional intelligence

It draws on a range of skills typologies including Personal Learning and Thinking Skills, SEAL, Futurelab's Enquiring Minds, and Bristol University's Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory. The five principles underpinning CREATE are accessibility, simplicity, transparency, transferability and evolutionary.

Exposure to real work

The schools are seen as a 'transition to the workplace' and therefore several features are designed to reflect the work setting. Studio Schools are open all year round, and students are required to book holidays over the course of the year. The work placements which are offered are linked to employment opportunities in the local area allowing students to develop practical knowledge of how businesses function and giving them 'hands-on' experience of the labour market. Each week students participate in real work, with those over 16 earning a proper wage and being employed as regular employees. Studio Schools also offer short internships with prestigious national and international employers. Exposing young people to a range of workplaces and job roles helps to build aspiration and understanding of the range of work opportunities available.

Personalisation

The Studio Schools curriculum allows for a high degree of personalisation to take account of individual aspirations, interests and needs. Each student has a personal coach who works with them to develop personalised learning programmes. Coaching allows students to arrive at solutions to problems through a process of enquiry and enables them to track their progress towards skills in the CREATE framework. A supportive personalised learning environment is also fostered through a small school size of around 300 students.

Mental Toughness Development

Website: www.aqr.co.uk/content/mental-toughness-development-knowsley
Founded: 2007
Location: Knowsley, England

Description: Application of Mental Toughness Development in an educational setting as part of a new learning offer in Knowsley

Background

In 2001 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council undertook a strategic review of its school system leading to the publication of Future Schooling in Knowsley: Towards 21st Century Learning Environments 2006-2008. This set out a new vision for an increased integration of services for children and families. Subsequently, the £150 million Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme has seen the creation of seven new centres for learning to replace eleven secondary schools. Eve Byrne, Executive Development Officer, Directorate of Children and Family Services, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, said: "From the very inception of the Centres for Learning, they were designed not to just be building transformations but transformations in the experience of learning and the approaches taken into the classroom."[75] Since 2007 Knowsley has been working alongside Hull University and The Association for Qualitative Research (AQR) to measure the mental toughness (or resilience) of students as they enter into secondary education. This approach was driven by the council's Executive Director of Children and Family Services, Damian Allen, and it made Knowsley the first local authority in the UK to use Mental Toughness Development in an educational setting. A psychometric test called MTQ48 was piloted in 2009 with a trial cohort and during 2011, it was been used across all students in year 11. Throughout this academic year interventions are being delivered to improve mental toughness. The interventions fall into five broad areas: positive thinking, visualisation anxiety control, attentional control, goal setting and feedback.

Key ingredients

Evidence-based approach

Mental toughness has a strong correlation with wellbeing, positive behaviours, school completion rates, and employability. Studies carried out in schools, colleges and universities in the UK and in the Netherlands consistently show that around 25 per cent of the variation in a person's performance in exams is explained by their mental toughness.[76] The MTQ48 test itself is scientifically proven and many of the interventions have been used effectively in sports or occupational psychology settings. However, as stakeholders indicate, it required a leap of faith to invest in the interventions and trial them in an educational setting. Eve Byrne added: "Over the course of this year, we're testing out the interventions and then at the end of this year, all the year sevens will retake the test again and from that we're hoping to have a really strong evidence base of the type of interventions that are working".[77]

Coordination of key stakeholders

It was considered critical to involve the individuals who are responsible for developing the mental toughness of young people in planning, implementation and evaluation. In the original pilot study teachers took the MTQ48 test as well the students. Mental Toughness Leads at the Centres For Learning meet regularly to share practice and discuss how the mental toughness is being promoted. A high value has also been placed on starting with the lived experience of the young people so that their needs could be responded to effectively. This involved bringing together groups of young people and working with them to develop personal and social development programmes. Over the summer of 2010 a team of Young

Advisors established the Knowsley Learning Commission and conducted discussions with over 800 students from all year groups. This was used to evaluate the impact of the move to the new Centres for Learning and makes suggestions for further improvements.

Holistic view of young people's learning

The Mental Toughness Development work in Knowsley goes beyond specific targeted interventions in the classroom. Knowsley MBC has taken a holistic view of the learning offer by linking formal and informal education provision to address specific areas of need for particular young people. "The learning offer for young people is not just about formal learning but about informal learning that leads to the engagement and empowerment of communities," said Sandra Richardson, Head of Youth Services, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council.[78] Students are provided with multiple structured and unstructured opportunities to learn. The new Centres for Learning are designed to act as community hubs with access provided outside the school timetable. In addition, several pilots are being planned to investigate different applications of mental toughness assessment, such as implementing them in youth work programmes and careers advice services.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

Website: www.casel.org/
Founded: 1994
Location: USA
Description: Not-for-profit organisation investigating the best ways to advance children's social and emotional learning.

Background

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a not-for-profit organisation founded by Daniel Goleman and Eileen Rockefeller Growald with a mission to establish social and emotional learning (SEL) as an essential part of education. The field of SEL is based on the growing recognition that promoting children's healthy social and emotional development is central to their future success in school and life. CASEL is based in the USA but has become a leading international resource, acting as a catalyst, convener, and supporter for the SEL movement. It seeks to bridge the gap between science and practice of SEL as well as documenting how SEL adds value to other approaches that address children's successful development.

Key ingredients

Strongly grounded in rigorous evidence

Rigorous science provides an essential foundation for effective educational policies and practices. CASEL conducts research and synthesizes the latest empirical findings before putting them to the test in real-world settings. After these methods have been tested and validated, CASEL disseminates proven new approaches through books, articles, workshops, training, and electronic media. CASEL has built a reputation for its scholarship but it also works closely with practitioners in the field. Some of the outputs of CASEL's research include a framework for SEL programming, a road map for schools that are launching SEL initiatives, and a meta-analysis of more than 700 studies of SEL programmes. CASEL's research has

shown a wide range of benefits for students including an increase in positive behaviours, and significant improvement in academic achievement.

Cross-field and cross-discipline collaborations

CASEL has a central staff based at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) but collaboration has played a central part in CASEL's work. A community has been created which cuts across many disciplines: educational reform, school-based prevention, cognitive development, character education, and mental health. There is a strong commitment to an open exchange of ideas, inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary sharing of new knowledge, and reciprocity. Collaborating organisations have included the Academic Development Institute, American Institutes for Research, Chicago Public Schools, Fetzer Institute, and the Illinois State Board of Education.

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning

Website: www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR049
Founded: 2007
Location: England
Description: Whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that support effective learning, positive behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

Background

The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) framework was used by approximately 90 per cent of primary schools and 70 per cent of secondary schools in England in 2006, and later extended further. It was first implemented as the curriculum strand of the national Behaviour and Attendance Pilot in 2003-2005,[79] which also included behaviour-management coaching for teachers (provided by local authorities) and small-group work. Some 90 per cent of teachers felt the programme was at least relatively successful, though children's attitudes to school still became less positive with age and parents were reluctant to participate. The schools which most fully implemented every aspect of the programme reported the best results. SEAL is founded on the social and emotional skills classified under the five domains in Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence: self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.[80]

Key ingredients

Building a school ethos to promote social and emotional skills

The implementation of SEAL encompasses all pupils and staff at the school as well as outside agencies, and rests on clear planning to improve standards, behaviour and attendance. A positive school ethos is key, as is involving parents or carers and the community in school life and training to help staff improve their own social and emotional skills and recognise their importance in the school environment. Opportunities for children to develop and enhance social and emotional skills are planned into the curriculum. The programme's focus on explicit teaching of such skills has been censured, with critics citing a lack of evidence for the benefits of a formal approach and an over-emphasis on targets and evaluation.[81]

Involving pupils in all aspects of school life

The second wave of implementation consists of small group interventions for children who are thought to require additional support in social and emotional skills. The sessions provide a safe environment for the selected children to reflect, practice new skills, learn about themselves and develop ways of relating to others.[82] Evaluation suggests such groups have small positive effects on pupils' social and emotional skills, behaviour and attendance. Some of the participating children are selected as 'role models' who already show good emotional literacy. These children support others and ensure that the group isn't seen as a way to withdraw disruptive pupils from the classroom. Success was dependent on the skills of the facilitator, setting achievable targets for children, ensuring that the sessions were fun and that a suitable time and space was provided.

Generative approach

SEAL differs from many programmes in that it is a loose framework that schools are encouraged to adapt to their individual contexts rather than a one-size-fits-all package. Though this allows more tailored, relevant approaches it does hinder effective large-scale evaluation. A recent report assessing the effect of SEAL in secondary schools found that implementation was patchy, and that fuller implementation of SEAL over longer time periods and with greater investment of time would pay dividends.[83]

SEL standards in Illinois

Website: www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm
Founded: 2003
Location: Illinois, USA
Description: Standards for Social Emotional Learning covering 4,533 schools

Background

Illinois was the first US state to adopt comprehensive freestanding social and emotional learning (SEL) standards. In 2002 a state-wide Children's Mental Health Task Force began advocating legislation that would require Illinois to establish SEL standards. This led to the Children's Mental Health Act in 2003 and the School Policy and Standards Committee then collaboratively developed the standards with teachers, school administrators, student support staff and parents. These describe what students are expected to know and be able to do as well as communicating educational priorities and providing a framework for designing curricula and planning instruction. The state has taken the lead in determining what works to support SEL in their 4,500 schools and the two million school children they serve. The overarching lesson is that implementing SEL standards "is a complex, iterative process - a journey where the path may look muddy even when the vision of the end is clear."[84] For most schools, it takes three to five years to fully integrate SEL with academic programming and build supportive school-family-community partnerships.

Key ingredients

Standards and accountability

The Children's Mental Health Act of 2003 called on all schools in Illinois to:

- incorporate SEL as a central component to their mission

- take concrete steps to enhance students' development in these areas
- include SEL in school plans
- develop policies for integrating SEL into the district's educational programme.

SEL standards in Illinois have helped to hold schools accountable for the social and emotional development of students. They require schools to conduct valid and reliable assessments of social, emotional, academic, and health-related outcomes, as well as of the school environment based on input from students, parents, teachers, and community members.

On-going assessment and evaluation

Rigorous evaluation has enabled schools to determine the impact of SEL instruction on children and plan for continuous improvement. Data was collected twice each year and used to assess the quality of SEL implementation in the cohort of schools that participated in the three-year pilot (2007-2010). This was instrumental in providing feedback to schools regarding SEL implementation progress and guide next steps.

Professional development

The introduction of SEL standards in Illinois was complemented by a plan for professional development to support implementation. Training and technical assistance was provided to educators throughout the pilot project to increase understanding of the link between SEL and academic success, expand use of best-practice resources for building social emotional skills, and contribute to assessments. There was also a recognition that professional development needs to be on-going, reflective, collaborative, and based on knowledge about adult learning.

Conclusions

There is an emerging global consensus about the need to better equip young people with the social and emotional skills which will enable them to navigate transitions from school to work, in increasingly uncertain times. Academic and education communities are publishing ever stronger evidence of the personal and societal benefits of social and emotional competencies, while employers assert their vital importance in the 21st century workplace.

In many ways, South Australia is a leader in this field, pioneering a new curriculum through the SACE and supporting a number of different social and emotional learning initiatives in different areas of the state.

And yet despite this good work, a small but significant number of young people continue to experience disadvantage, and employers' voices continue to raise concern about the mismatch between the capabilities of school leavers and the demands of the workplace. Young people from rural and remote communities and deprived inner city estates are missing the connections to workplaces and work experience. Those from Indigenous backgrounds remain significantly more likely to be out of work or moving quickly through a series of poorly paid jobs. All this means that 15 per cent of young South Australians are currently out of education or employment, with patterns of disengagement relatively ingrained. Furthermore, the global economic slowdown, and consequent reduction of opportunities, means that educational achievement and strong social networks are not guaranteed to insulate young people from shocks.

It is clear therefore that now is a real opportunity to devise a new approach to systematically ensuring that every young South Australian has access to quality SEL provision. The experience of our 12 international case studies suggests that the following is needed:

- A systematic gathering of evidence on which approaches to developing social and emotional competencies work, in which context, and with which communities. There is potential for the South Australian Government to lead the field in this regard.
- Further emphasis on SEL at the core of the curriculum and ethos of a school. This may well be a natural by-product of 'ironing out the creases' in the roll out of SACE.
- Continued investment in professional development of teachers, so that they feel responsibility towards – and empowered in – the building of social and emotional competencies. This role would sit alongside championing the evidence base for social and emotional learning, so as to affect the culture change needed.
- Better integration of social and emotional learning programmes into the wider community. This could be through links with businesses and other employers to offer work-based training or research projects. It could also be achieved through connections with mentors, community groups, parents and other role models to help young people develop well-rounded skill sets that enable them to relate to adults and demonstrate commitment and self-discipline in any task they do. The South Australian government has already done much to champion these approaches, but more work at the local level is needed.

- Clearer targets for the delivery of social and emotional initiatives, with the state or local bodies agreeing with schools and TAFE centres how social and emotional learning will be delivered. They will need to monitor the outcomes (or the difference this makes to outcomes for young people) not the activity (for example the number of 'hours' of programme provision). Locally-agreed targets could catalyse commitment to the approach.

Each of these areas has the potential to help improve the system of developing social and emotional competencies across the state. Of course, none of these five areas holds the solution alone. We would recommend exploratory investment in each of these five areas and the South Australian Government is well placed in this regard. It has already demonstrated both a political commitment and the operational resources to championing the approaches of social and emotional learning and continues to demonstrate an appetite to do more.

Underpinning all the recommendations above is recognition of the importance of empowering young people to negotiate their own learning and work journey. At the beginning of this paper we called for a greater focus on SEED skills, each of which is vital to enable young people to move from being a passive recipient of education to an active navigator.

Navigators can confidently move around the system and make choices for themselves. They have the skills to work well with both their peers and with adults, an attribute which is vital in the workplace. And crucially, skilled navigators have the emotional resilience or 'bounce back' ability to deal with set-backs and failure and to find a new path for themselves. Teaching young people the skills of navigation should be at the heart of any systematic framework to improve the teaching of social and emotional competencies. Young people with a sense of their pathways in life have a better likelihood of making successful transitions, not only to learning and earning, but also to shaping their world.

Of course there are many other approaches to improving outcomes for young people, which should sit alongside a strong focus on social and emotional competencies, as part of a holistic view of young people as learners. These include strengthening teaching in core skills like science and maths, embedding literacy and numeracy learning in context, ensuring medium-term work placements are part of the curriculum, building early links to vocational career pathways and more.

But the evidence outlined in this paper and the promising practice from South Australia and further afield suggests that when concerted effort is made to build the social and emotional competencies of young people, they are much more likely to go on to meaningful and sustainable employment, with better outcomes into adulthood. And that is the ambition which the employers, schools, communities and Government of South Australia share: to see every young person thrive.

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